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# JEAN PAUL MARAT;

[THE PEOPLE'S FRIEND]

A Biographical Sketch.

BY

ERNEST BELFORT BAX.



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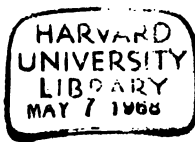
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# JEAN PAUL MARAT.

## CHAPTER I.

WERE we called upon to designate the best abused man in modern history, I think we should not be far wrong in assigning this place of honour, or dishonour, as the case may be, to the individual whose name heads this sketch. The following are only a few of the *sobriquets* which have been liberally showered upon him by almost every writer who has handled the subject of the French Revolution.

M. Michelet styles him the "personification of murder;" Sir Walter Scott compares him to a "wolf;" most writers designate him as the "monster;" even Mr. Carlyle, who would treat the memory of the "Sea-green Incorruptible" himself with some degree of consideration, has no name for "this poor man Marat" but that of "dog-leech," "obscene spectrum," &c.

The Marat of tradition and of public opinion is,

in fact, a mask, whereon is depicted, in a rough and ready manner, all that is most hideous in human nature; it is made to carry *in propria personâ* all the errors and shortcomings of the Revolution, magnified into crimes by reaction and prejudice, much as the masks of the Greek actors displayed the human emotions—the grave or gay character being laid on liberally and without much regard to detail. Now I purpose in the ensuing pages to divest the name Marat, if only for awhile, of this grotesque suit of malevolence with which it has been enshrouded by the prejudice of public opinion and tradition, and to lay bare to English readers, as briefly as possible, the real man who bore this name—the Marat of history. I am led to this, firstly, by the desire of helping to rescue the memory of a man whom I believe to have been possessed of a moral earnestness and steadfastness of purpose rarely met with; secondly, to contribute, by this one instance of its worthlessness, to a healthy distrust and contempt for the world's judgment and public opinion in its existing state.

With the speculative opinions put forth by Marat I very frequently differ, and although agreeing in certain of his conclusions I conceive them to have been arrived at by a false method which considerably diminishes their value. It is not the thinker so much as the man whom I honour in the present case. Of Marat in his former capacity I shall say a few words presently, after having laid before my readers a brief outline of his life.

Let us first of all glance at his personal appearance. One of the most authentic portraits is probably that in the Chevreumont collection, where the "people's friend" is represented seated at his writing table, one hand grasping his pen, the other the Phrygian cap. The bust taken after death is probably less trustworthy than is usually the case with after-death busts, owing to the violent nature of Marat's death. The portrait by Boze is affirmed to be at once very trustworthy and characteristic; but the following description from the pen of one who knew him well, both in his public and private life, may convey a better idea than any of them:—

"Marat was of short stature, scarcely five feet high. He was nevertheless of a firm, thick-set figure, without being stout. The shoulders and bust were broad, the lower part of the body thin, the legs bowed, the arms strong, which latter he employed with much vigour and grace in speaking. Upon a rather short neck he carried a head of very pronounced character. His countenance was large and bony, the nose aquiline, the nostrils wide and somewhat depressed; the mouth was curled at one corner by a frequent contraction; the lips were thin; the eyes of a greyish yellow colour, *spirituel*, animated, penetrating, serene, naturally soft, and even gracious, and conveying a look of great assurance. The beard was black, the hair brown, and *négligé*; he was accustomed to walk with head erect, rapidly backwards and forwards, in regular time (*cadencé*.)

His most usual attitude was with his arms firmly crossed upon his chest. In speaking in society he always appeared much agitated, and almost invariably ended the expression of a sentiment by a movement of his foot, which he thrust rapidly forward, stamping with it at the same time on the ground, and then rising on tiptoe, as though to lift his short stature to the height of his opinion. The tone of his voice was thin, sonorous, slightly hoarse, and of a ringing quality. A defect of the tongue rendered it difficult for him to pronounce clearly the letters c and s, to which he was accustomed to give the sound of g (in French). There was no other perceptible peculiarity, excepting a rather heavy mode of utterance; but the beauty of his thought, the fulness of his eloquence, the simplicity of his elocution, and the point of his speeches absolutely effaced this maxillary heaviness."

After noticing his conduct in the tribune, the writer concludes his description, thus—

"He dressed in a careless manner; indeed, his negligence in this particular announced a complete ignorance of the conventionalities of custom and of taste, and one might almost say gave him an air of uncleanness."—*Portrait de Marat par Fabre d'Eglantine.*

The above may be taken as a perfectly impartial description, inasmuch as the author was far from a vehement partisan of Marat, in fact, was probably the reverse of prejudiced in his favour. Here then

is the figure which historians have portrayed as a semi-human monster, a hideous toad, &c.

Jean Paul Marat was born at Boudry, in what was at that time the Prussian principality, now the Swiss Canton of Neuchâtel, on the 24th of May, 1743, of Jean Paul Marat, a native of Cagliari, in Sardinia, and of Louise Cabrol, of Geneva. His father was a medical man. Both parents were Calvinists. It is asserted that he had two brothers and two sisters, but of the precise number we have very little evidence. The central point in Marat's moral character, his burning horror of injustice, and his vivid sympathy with the oppressed, seems to have been inherited, or at all events to have received its early development, from his mother, whose memory he, to the last, held in affectionate esteem. He relates that among his earliest recollections were those of visiting with her the poor of his native place, administering with his own hands the relief needed, and listening to the words of sympathy which fell from her lips. Marat received the advantage of an exceptionally good education, both general and scientific, in his father's house. He states that he never cared for the ordinary games of children, and being naturally of a thoughtful and studious disposition needed little coercion from his tutors. There is one very characteristic incident connected with this period, which I cannot forbear quoting in his own words: "I was never chastised but once," he writes, "and this time the sentiment



of an unjust humiliation made such an impression on me, that it was found impossible to bring me again under the rule of my instructor. I refused food for two whole days. At that time I was eleven years old, and the strength of my character may be estimated by this one incident. My parents not being able to bend my resolution, and the paternal authority finding itself compromised, I was locked up in my own room. Unable to resist the indignation which choked me, I opened the casement, and threw myself down into the street. So severely was I cut in the fall, that I bear the mark on my forehead to this day.\*

Marat was not quite sixteen when his mother died, and this proved the first great turning-point in his career; from henceforth the ties of home seem to have been broken for him, for with no other member of the family does he appear to have been in the same close intimacy, as with her. The elder Jean Paul we may infer to have been of a somewhat cold disposition, or at all events too much absorbed in his studies, readily to sympathise with a boy of Jean Paul's sensibility.

Whether primarily influenced by these considerations, or as is perhaps more probable, by a desire no longer to be a burden on his father, whose cir-

\**Journal de la République*, No. 98. "I reflected at fifteen, observed at eighteen, and became a thinker at twenty. From the age of ten I had contracted a studious mode of life; intellectual activity became a veritable necessity for me, even in illness, and my greatest pleasure I always found in meditation."—*Ibid.*

cumstances although sufficient to provide a thorough education for his son, we may presume were far from affluent, we find in the summer of 1759, our hero quitting his home on the banks of the Neufchâtel Lake, to seek his fortune in the wide world; a world wherein the approaching convulsion was already gathering its forces; where the mediæval civilisation was gasping its last real life-breath; where the Catholic and Feudal edifice was crumbling and tottering; where, in religion, in literature, in philosophy as well as in political and social relations, all things were preparing for a great change—a change to which the French Revolution was merely the prelude, and through which we are even now passing, although as yet very far from its consummation; in short, the world of the Great Frederick, of Voltaire, Rousseau and the Encyclopædists, and of the then embryonic, *Sturm und Drang*.

It was not as many might have imagined, the political and social aspect of things that first of all attracted young Marat's attention in any prominent degree; but the, at that time, rising scientific spirit of which the *Principia* of Newton was the Organon. ]

We may divide Marat's life into three periods; the first, the period of childhood, closing with his quittal of the parental roof, in 1759. The second, the period of professional and scientific activity, from 1759 to 1789; the third, that to which both the others may be considered but as preparatory stages; the period of political and journalistic

activity; from the publication of his *Offering to the Country*, in 1789 to his death in 1793.

Of the immediate destination of Jean Paul's wanderings on first leaving his home, we have no very certain evidence. We know, however, that he visited in turn most of the countries and capitals of Western Europe. He writes in the last year of his life; "From the age of sixteen I have been absolute master of my conduct. I have passed ten years in London, one at Dublin, one at the Hague, Utrecht, and Amsterdam, nineteen in Paris, and have traversed the half of Europe;" a course probably in part necessitated by his professional avocations, of which we have various reports. According to one of these, he was filling the chair of French language and literature, in the University of Edinburgh in the year 1772. We have satisfactory evidence, that he was offered an important professorship in the *Académie des Sciences* at Madrid about 1782, which it is alleged he was prevented from filling, owing to the machinations of Bailly.

Marat's literary activity during the second half of this period of his life may be estimated by the following list of his works (consisting, in the majority of cases, each of more than one bulky volume), written and published by him between 1770 and 1789:—*A Philosophical Essay on Man, or the Laws and Mutual Action of the Body on the Soul, and of the Soul on the Body*, in 3 volumes, by J. P. Marat, Doctor of Medicine, London, 1773; *The Chains of*

*Slavery*, London, 1774, 1 volume, 364 pages. *Découvertes de M. Marat, Docteur en Médecine et Médecin des Gardes du Corps de Monseigneur le Comte d'Artois, sur le Feu, l'Electricité et la Lumière, &c.*, Paris, 1779. This work ran through two editions in one year. *Recherches Physiques sur le Feu*, do., do., Paris, 1782, one volume, in 8vo., 202 pages; *Plus Approbation et Privilège du Roi*; sept planches en noir. This work is said to have appeared in translation at Leipsic, in company with two others of Marat's, in 1782. *Découvertes, de M. Marat, &c., sur la Lumière, qui ont été faites un très-grand nombre de fois sous les yeux de MM. les Commissaires de l'Académie des Sciences*, London and Paris, 1782, 1 volume, in 8vo., 461 pages, &c.; *Notions Élémentaires de l'Optique*, Paris, 1784, 1 volume, 44 pages; *Recherches sur l'Electricité*, 1 volume, in 8vo., 461 pages, Paris, 1782; *Mémoires sur l'Electricité Médicale, couronnés le 6 Août, 1783, par l'Académie Royale des Sciences, Belles-Lettres et Arts de Rouen*, 1 volume, in 8vo., 111 pages, Paris, 1784; anon., *Optique de Newton, Traduction Nouvelle, faite par M. —*, sur la dernière édition originale, ornée de 21 planches, et approuvée par l'Académie Royale des Sciences, Paris, 1787, 2 volumes, in 8vo., tome 1<sup>re</sup>, 192 pages, tome 2<sup>me</sup>, 308 pages; *Mémoires Académiques, ou Nouvelles Découvertes sur la Lumière, relatives aux points importants de l'Optique*, Paris, 1788, 1 volume, in 8vo., 324 pages, 10 planches. To these must be added *An Essay on a Singular Disease of the Eyes*, by MM. —,

M.D., at Nicholls', St. Paul's Churchyard, or Williams', in the Strand (without date); and, what may seem, to many, strangest of all, a novel, founded on a Polish subject, which, however, never saw the light until 1848, when it was published in the *Siècle*, as *Un Roman de Cœur, par Marat, "l'Ami du Peuple,"* as was alleged from the original manuscript. The above list may be regarded as including all the important non-political writings of which Marat was the author, and I think my readers will agree it is no insignificant array for a "dog-leech" or "marsh-frog" to produce.

To the *Récherches sur l'Electricité*, the *Académie* awarded the following high commendation:—

"True progress in physical science only being possible with the aid of experiment, all memoirs and treatises should be founded on experiments, correctly made and attested, to serve as a basis for the truths, which it is their purpose to establish; such is the course the present author has adopted."

Probably few persons are aware that among the number of Marat's friends during his residence in London was the celebrated physicist, Franklin, with whom he used frequently to conduct optical experiments. In addition to the academical posts he at various times filled, he gained considerable reputation while in London in the medical profession, especially in curing diseases of the eyes; as we are informed by his widow in her preface to the posthumous edition of his political works.

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This may have partly contributed to his appointment, in 1779, as physician to the body-guard of the Comte d'Artois. Could we have more conclusive evidence than the last fact of the futile nature of the charge of charlatanry, certain historians have seen fit to bring against Marat in his medical capacity? As M. Bougeart observes, the court was not so empty of aspirants to an honourable position like this to render it necessary for one of the first noblemen in France to engage a charlatan in his service.

With his retirement from the Comte d'Artois' employment, in 1787, we may consider the middle, or scientific period of Marat's life virtually to close. The first act of the great revolutionary drama was shortly to commence, and doubtless political and social considerations already occupied his thoughts, well nigh to the exclusion of all others.

I should not omit to mention that about this time he was attacked by an incurable malady, that nearly caused his death, and which, although the acute attack subsided, he well knew could only completely terminate with his existence.

## CHAPTER II.

EARLY in the year 1789 Marat published his *Offrande à la Patrie*, and this may be regarded as the first of that long series of political writings that went so far, at once to stimulate and consolidate the course of the Revolution. With this the real life-work of Marat, that which will ever render his name a prominent one in history, may be said to commence.

The *Offrande à la Patrie*, consists of two "*brochures*" the first containing five discourses, the second (published as a supplement to the first) four. It treats of various topics bearing upon the then imminent crisis, urging unity upon the people in the common cause, warning them against corruption, and denouncing the ministers of finance, who, by their malversations had so powerfully contributed to the ruin of France; (an exception being made in favour of Turgot) the one upright man among them. The pamphlets had a considerable circulation, and may be said to have given their author a foot-hold in the political arena.

The next important event we have on record, is his conduct on the ever memorable 14th of July of the same year; the day of the (storming of the Bastille.) It is well known that Marat was present and took an active part in that event; but as every detail

connected with it has been so often recapitulated, it would be superfluous to do more than mention it in this place. We will therefore pass on to the ensuing evening and observe how he acts, A rumour gained currency towards nightfall, to the effect that several battalions of the royal troops were about to enter the city, to fraternise with the populace, and if need be, to fight on their side. The news of this sudden conversion, aroused very grave suspicions in the mind of the "people's friend." Upon learning that a numerous detachment was already reconnoitering, and having passed through the Quartier St. Honoré, was on its way to the Quartier St. Germain; he, in his character of popular sentinel, went in search, encountering the troops on the Pont Neuf, where a halt was being made to enable their officer to harangue the surrounding crowd, by whom they were being enthusiastically cheered. The tone of the officer's speech, announcing the speedy arrival of the Royal Hussars, Royal German Cavalry, &c., proving anything, but calculated to inspire confidence, Marat pressed through the crowd, seized the bridle of his horse, and begged the commandant of the accompanying civic guard to reassure himself respecting them. This the latter refused to do, calling Marat a dreamer (*visionnaire*), who retorted by calling him an imbecile, and insisting that the cavalry detachment should be at once challenged to dismount and deliver up their arms, as a pledge of fidelity; to be re-delivered as soon as the *bonâ fide* nature of the



case was made out. The commandant still refusing, Marat turned to the by-standers, and in a loud voice denounced the whole affair as a conspiracy, the intention being to quarter the troops in the city, and under cover of the night to massacre the unsuspecting populace. The horror and consternation which spread amongst the crowd may be well imagined. Ultimately after being threatened, the commandant *did* challenge the Royal troops, in the manner Marat had suggested, and the latter of course declining the proposal, were re-conducted to their own camp *sous bon escort*. The service rendered on this occasion to the Revolution and humanity can hardly be over estimated. Had the infamous attempt exposed, succeeded, a massacre far exceeding those of September three years later must have inevitably resulted. ]

On the following Sunday morning, on his re-appearance at the *Comité des Carmes*, of which he was a member ; Marat proposed, that under the auspices of the Committee, a journal having for its object a commentary on the current events, should be established, offering himself as editor, at the same time remarking that he felt this to be the way he could best serve the country. His proposition being rejected, and Marat, as he expresses it, feeling his total inaptitude for anything else, in the shape of public work, retired ; but shortly afterwards put the project into execution at his own expense, in the form of a journal, entitled *Le Moniteur Patriote*, though only one number saw the light under his editorship. It was followed in a few

days by a pamphlet entitled *La Constitution, ou Projet de Declaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen, suivi d'un plan de Constitution juste, sage et libre par l'Auteur de l'Offrande à la Patrie. Paris, chez Buisson, 1789, in 8vo. 67 pages.*

This work together with a subsequent one, the *Plan de Législation Criminelle*, constituted the theoretic basis of Marat's political action. They were both founded on Rousseau's Social Contract, which has been aptly characterised as the gospel of the period. It assumed society to be based solely on a hypothetical compact between the individual and the mass or community. It formed the text for all social and political speculation at the time. The hypothesis, although doubtless expressing a truth, was inadequate. Its stand-point was exclusively subjective—it omitted to take into due consideration the objective stand-point of historic evolution. Man is conditioned in all his relations, and when one set of conditions is viewed to the exclusion of others, fallacy inevitably results.

It is an important question for the student of the philosophy of history, indeed we may say the great central question; in how far human development is determined like lower forms of development by inflexible cosmic laws, and where the individual man may be viewed as a modifying cause, in other words, the precise point at which human will enters as an element of causation.

Hitherto, all those historians, who have left the theological hypothesis out of account, have been

divided into two camps, the one maintaining the entire subjection of human affairs to objective laws, and the other their entirely capricious and subjective nature.

Most thinkers are now familiar with the truth (first worked out by Comte), that the laws of human nature are based upon the laws of animal nature generally, and these again on the laws of inorganic nature and so on. For those who accept this position (the doctrine of evolution in its simplest form), the statement of the problem of the philosophy of history becomes comparatively easy. Recognising each series of phenomena to involve something specially its own over and above that which has preceded it in the scale of existence—and recognising this something in the human series to be definite action directed by conscious intelligence—it must stand thus:—to sift that element in history where the consciously directed will enters as a casual agent from those elements directly traceable to other and lower causes. But although the statement of the problem becomes simplified; its *adequate* solution seems well-nigh an impossibility, for it amounts to nothing less than determining, for example, the extent of Charlemagne's influence as an individuality on the subsequent state of Europe; or in other words what that state would have been had Charlemagne not lived; or to take another instance, that of the French Revolution, in determining the amount and character of the influence exercised by Voltaire,

Rousseau, and the other great pre-revolutionary thinkers (considered in the light of individualities and not as mere products of their time), upon the succeeding events. This question of the determining power of individuality, as distinguished from lower elements of causation, although impossible completely to disentangle from that complex whole,—human progress—if clearly kept in view as the first object of the science of history, might be sufficiently elucidated to throw a flood of light for our present and future guidance, both on the abstract science of sociology and on the practical domain of action.

On the (8th of September 1789,) the Parisians were greeted with the prospectus of a new journal bearing the heading—*Le Publiciste Parisien, Journal Politique, Libre et Impartial, par une Société des Patriotes, et rédigé par M. Marat, Auteur de "l'Offrande à la Patrie," du "Moniteur," du Plan de Constitution,"* &c. &c., with the usual epigram of Marat's "*Vitam impendere vero,*" (spend life in the cause of truth.) Sixteen days afterwards its name was changed to that of (*Ami du Peuple,*) a name which has ever since been used as an alternative for that of Marat himself. Within the first month of its appearance, its editor was summoned twice before the Commune, and in consequence of this, the words "*Par une Société des Patriotes,*" were struck out of the heading, the journal appearing as edited by M. Marat alone; to avert the possibility of others being implicated in the prosecutions, he well knew, still awaited himself.

The character, the "*Ami du Peuple*," assumed, was proximately determined by the election of the "States General," and the composition of the assembly, the average stamp of whose members were men of the Malouet and Mounier type. One party in the chamber was for delivering France over to the English; the majority were only waiting for an opportunity, to reinstate the absolute monarchy as it was before the 14th of July; while to crown all, a famine had been concerted, or had every appearance of being so, by the agents of government, to reduce the populace to complete submission.

The success of the journal was signal and complete, notwithstanding that every possible obstacle was thrown in its way by the authorities. At one time the patrols of Lafayette would seize the copies from the hands of the colporteurs; at another they would be intercepted through the post on their way to the departments. To avert the danger constantly overhanging him of the printers refusing their services, or having their licence taken away, before many months were over Marat was driven to set up a press in his own room, and to commence printing on his own account, expending on this enterprise his whole fortune. It may be well to consider in a few words what was this far-famed paper—the *Ami du Peuple*. As has been often enough remarked, to us at this distance of time, the numbers seem but a dreary succession of denunciations and personal attacks; it must, however, be borne in mind that the journal

was intended to fulfil a special object, a practical object of the hour; not merely to direct the course of public opinion on matters of general policy, but to constitute itself the organ of the oppressed of all classes, an organ where every wrong could be recorded, as far as space allowed, in the language of the victim, and so to become a terror to official "evil doers." This being the only medium through which the oppressed could make their wrongs public, it is obvious complaints, and their consequent denunciations, filled much of its space. It must further be borne in mind that the France of the period, in its official aspect, was, from the King on the throne downwards to the meanest police agent, one rotten mass of unblushing corruption and villainy—a state of things only to be paralleled in our own day by Turkey.

The following is an instance, on a small scale, of what was daily occurring in one way or another throughout the whole governmental system :—A commissary of police, having seduced the wife of a maker of harpsichords, had abused his authority to have the latter dragged to Bicêtre. After vividly depicting the man's utter ruin, Marat concludes as follows :—The *Sieur Heintzler* lodges in the Rue St. Jacques de Latran, &c. As his barbarous persecutor, after the horrors he has already perpetrated, may be justly suspected of anything, I demand that he be at once arrested by the police, to prevent his again being able to approach his victim, whom I place under the protection of the revolutionary committee of his section."

That the strength of Marat's sympathy was not affected by distance may be judged from his language on the occasion of the ill-treatment of some sailors by their officers on the coast of Newfoundland, when he writes:—"At the thought of such ferocity, the heart is wrung with sorrow and choked with indignation. One trembles at the lot of these unfortunate victims of cupidity and cruelty; one burns with fury against their horrible oppressors." There was no tale of wrong or suffering that did not find an echo in the heart of Jean Paul Marat, and a ready place in his journal. To multiply instances here would be superfluous when the journal teems with them, scarcely a number appearing without some notice of the kind. Morning, noon, and night was the People's friend assailed, both personally and in writing, by the unfortunate imploring his assistance.

I propose to cite one of these only, as shewing into what unexpected quarters the general confidence in Marat had penetrated. In number 88 of the *Ami*, January 5th, 1798, we find it thus recorded:—"Last Friday afternoon, about three o'clock, the Sister Catherine, nun at the *Abbaye de Pantenont*, presented herself before me, accompanied by a lady who appeared to be her mother. . . . The visit of a tall, young, and beautiful woman in such a costume could not but astonish me. I asked to know the purport of her coming. She held in her hand a number of my journal, and informed me that she

had come from the Faubourg St. Antoine to beg me to aid her with my advice. Her open and unaffected manner, the tone of sorrow audible in her voice, and her ingenuousness, which announced a simple and honest soul, inspired me with interest on her behalf. I enquired the cause of her misfortunes. She informed me that the previous morning she had escaped from the tower, where an attendant had concealed himself as best he could. The following is our conversation almost word for word, as far as my memory serves me, for I did not take any notes :—‘What was it, my sister, determined you to such a bold step?’ ‘The bad treatment I was continually made to suffer in the convent.’ ‘By whom, may I ask?’ ‘By the Mesdames de Cherie de Crèveton, and, above all, by Madame de Bétisi, my mistress.’ ‘What was this bad treatment?’ ‘I have been ceaselessly worried, many times beaten, and kept in penitence till my knees were quite lacerated.’ ‘You seem to me an amiable person, what reasons could these ladies have had for treating you in this manner?’ The poor girl did not hesitate, but gave me a long recital, out of which, however, I could make very little. She stated that her cruel treatment resulted from the fact that Madame de Bétisi, who had compelled her to enter the convent, was jealous of the confidence she shewed to her coadjutrice, Madame de Varien. . . . Being unable to persuade myself that petty jealousies alone had been the occasion of such inhuman conduct, but readily guessing from the



resolute air of Anne Barbier (such was the name of the nun) that she had not been born to servitude, and judging from the fact of her having recourse to the 'People's friend,' that she might possibly be a '*patriote*,' I asked how she came to know of me, and if she ever had access to the public journals. 'We have in the convent the *Courier* of M. Mirabeau . . .' 'Have you never, my sister, spoken in the presence of these ladies on the subject of public affairs?' 'Oh, very often; I have even disputed with them. The day the Bastille was taken, they exclaimed, on seeing the citizens run to arms, 'There go those dogs, those scoundrels, who would massacre the faithful subjects of the King.' 'Why call them dogs? they are, perhaps, as good as you are.' 'Silence, insident one; do you know what you are saying?' 'Each time there has been a disturbance in Paris we have re-commenced our disputes.' After this simple exposure of facts it is clear that the Sister Catherine, given over to the rancour of these benign aristocrats, has become (by reason of her patriotic sentiments) the object of their petty vengeance, covered with the veil of hypocrisy."

In its political aspect the *Ami* was the logical counterpart of what it was in the humbler aspect we have just been contemplating; as in the one it was a protest against official injustice to individuals, so in the other it was a protest against official injustice towards masses and classes. Here also, and for the same reasons, we find ceaseless

denunciations. Every number is a protest against "the insolence of office" against vested interests and class government. Marat was always suspicious, and, as the sequel proved, only with too good reason, of those in power. Suspicion always seems contemptible unless it can be verified, and the fact of Marat's continual *dé fiance*, probably itself largely contributed, as Mr. Bowen Graves has suggested, to intimidate the guilty occupants of high positions, and so to prevent its verification by preventing the committal of the conjectured crimes. The cases, however, of Necker, of Damouriez, and subsequently of Barrère, proved that Marat possessed a real insight into character and conduct, and was no reckless slanderer. Any denunciation proved to be false was always apologised for with the same publicity as it was made.

But it must by no means be inferred from the foregoing remarks that the journal occupied simply the place of prosecutor to the Revolution, and expressed no positive or definite views beyond those involved in this capacity. As will be seen hereafter, its editor's political principles, based as they were upon the social contract of Rousseau, with a consistency inferior to that of no other political thinker of the time, he sought rigorously to carry out in the sphere of practical politics. Every event received its comment from this point of view with the utmost regularity. The size of the *Ami* was entirely regulated by the circumstances of the moment, sometimes consisting of a single sheet widely printed, sometimes of two or three sheets

closely printed. The colour of the paper varied also between blue, green, yellow, and white. It should be remarked that in the whole series of 642 numbers there is only to be found one coarse expression, used with initial letters, and subsequently retracted—this at a time when coarse epithets were flying about on all sides. One of the most annoying methods by which the Government party sought to weaken, or divert to its own uses, the popular confidence in Marat, (was by circulating spurious *Amis*) in which all Marat's views were (of course with as much appearance of seriousness as possible) absurdly travestied, and a copious amount of bloodthirsty advice given. Historians have eagerly caught up these forgeries as evidence of the sanguinary character of the "People's friend." A more usual and if anything still more annoying plan, and one which seems to have been so successful, as to lead to the abandonment of the former, was that of publishing advice purporting to come from Marat, either of an utterly *laissez faire* character, or else designed to promote discord in the popular ranks. On his return from London, in 1791 Marat found no less than four separate journals afloat, purporting to come from him, all of this nature. He writes, "I warn my readers, the friends of liberty, that they may distinguish my paper from the false *Amis* published under my name, if only by this, that the authors of the latter are sleepers, who always preach peace, tolerance of factious priests, patience under

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the outrages of public functionaries, submission to laws, good or bad, blind obedience of soldiers to their officers, &c."

What Marat wrote in his journal, he defended by word of mouth in the Cordelier's club, although he always regarded journalism as his vocation more than oratory. Danton owed his power to his speaking, Marat to his writing. In addition to his journal, the "People's friend" had two other modes of making his views public. He was accustomed on special occasions when "urgency" was required, to supplement the latter by (1) placards, (2) pamphlets. When any important crisis took place in public affairs, the placards were to be seen in all the most conspicuous places on the walls of Paris. Among the most notable of these placards, may be mentioned that on the occasion of the massacre of the troops at Nancy, "*Affreux Recueil*," that headed *On nous endort; prenons-y-garde*, an expression of indignation, of the prosecution of those who had taken part in the famine insurrection, of the 5th and 6th of October by the royalist court of the Chatelet, &c., &c. Among the pamphlets may be mentioned, the "*Appel à la Nation*," written from London in 1790. The "*Plan de Constitution*," already spoken of, and most important of all, the "*Plan de Législation Criminelle*," a system of legislation rigorously deduced from Rousseau's "Social Contract," and which it is said Marat regarded as his least imperfect work. Also the celebrated "*Dénonciation faite au Tribunal Pu-*

*blique, contre M. Necker*" &c., Marat having regarded the minister of finance as the principal agent of the famine, and the second "*Denonciation contre M. Necker*," &c., in which the charges made in the former pamphlet bearing that title, are further substantiated.

Constant attempts were being made, either by ill-judged wags, or by persons politically interested to palm some absurd story upon the "People's friend," to the intent that he might make himself ridiculous, and bring his journal and influence into contempt. Once, one of these anonymous letters, conveyed the intelligence that a large quantity of arms and ammunition was about to be deposited in the fortress of Vincennes, and that to prevent the affair coming to light, all the workmen engaged in it, were to be poisoned at a supper given them the same evening. The only notice taken of this was a paragraph in the next day's *Ami* concluding, "However clever my correspondent may be; the advice he gives is too improbable not to appear suspicious and even false. I warn honest men not to play with the 'People's friend,' any more, as he is never likely to be their dupe." No. 251.

## CHAPTER III.

THE first direct consequence of Marat's writings, was the so-called "Bread insurrection," or insurrection of women, October 6th, 1789, so vividly described by Mr. Carlyle, when the populace went *en masse* to Versailles, and which ended in the return of the royal family to Paris and their temporary reconciliation with the people.\*

From the first, the scarcity of bread was the daily theme of the "people's friend;" but it took a whole month effectually to rouse popular energy, to take steps for ameliorating this state of things. Although public discontent was allayed and the people and the "powers," reconciled for a time; the latter were by no means disposed to extend this reconciliation to their leader, as will be seen by what follows. On the

\* Respecting this event, Marat wrote. "The King, the Queen, and the Dauphin arrived in the capital about 7 o'clock in the evening. It is a joyful occasion for the good Parisians to possess their king. His presence will soon change the face of things; the poor people will no longer die of famine. But the good future will vanish like a dream, if we do not retain the royal family in our midst till the Constitution has been confirmed. The 'people's friend' will participate the joy of his co-citizens, but he will not abandon himself to sleep."

8th of October 1789, occurred the first seriously attempted prosecution, of which Marat was the object. It was really occasioned by his comments on the events of October the 6th, and his severe handling of the popular idol Neckar; but the pretext was a false accusation, apologised for the next day, made against one of the secretaries of the Commune. The indictment was launched by the court of the Châtelet. Its result was to compel Marat to seek refuge in a place of safety at Versailles; but from this, he was very nearly being betrayed into the hands of the authorities, by the perfidy of his host, when he was offered a real asylum in the house of his friend Leconitre.

After remaining here some days, to let the storm blow over, he ventured to return to Paris, choosing an obscure street of Montmartre, as the place of his domicile from whence on the 5th of November, the publication of the *Ami*, interrupted during his concealment, was resumed. On the 26th of this month as we have before mentioned, he established a press of his own in the Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie. It was not long however, before he was discovered in his retreat, and one morning early before he had risen from bed, he was aroused by hearing himself inquired for, and on opening the door, found a party of officials come to arrest him.

On arriving at the *Bureau des Recherches*, the triad of members necessary to form a tribunal, not being complete, Marat took a seat near the fire to await their coming. He says, "These gentlemen

had awakened me rather early, and as I had not breakfasted, I accepted a cup of chocolate and commenced conversation."

"Ready to interrogate me, they inquired (what they knew as well as I did) why I had left Paris, where I had been, how long I had remained in each place, &c.

"My interrogatory ended: M. de Lafayette arrives. The gentlemen of the committee present me to him."

"Who are those of my *état major*, who have given you offence?' he asked."

"I will let you know in a future number of the *Ami*," I replied."

From the *Comité des Recherches*, Marat was taken to the Commission of Police. On being reproached for his incessant denunciations, he rejoined, "Gentlemen, these are the disagreeables we have to put up with, in the passage from slavery to liberty. Do you really believe that a revolution such as this could accomplish itself without some misfortunes, without the shedding of some drops of blood? I entertain no hostile design against you, but had I to choose between my duty to the Commission of Police and my duty to liberty, my choice would be already made." No. 71. Marat's outspoken candour, had a powerful effect on the commission, which at once declared him set at liberty, even offering a coach to convey him home. One of the members, a M. Person, in the ardour of his enthusiasm embraced him, exclaiming, "Go my friend! go, write and unmask the villains." The difference between the old and the new *régime*



was beginning, although slowly, to make itself felt. Profiting by his favourable acquittal at the hands of the commission, the "People's friend" went next day to demand of Maire Bailly the restitution of the confiscated presses, allowing a quarter of an hour for delay in getting them. They were restored within the given time, and the following day the *Ami* appeared again as usual.

But the "Châtelet" was not to be beaten so easily as the municipality. On the 21st of January 1790, the mandate of October 8th was renewed, and vigorous were the measures taken, to prevent its missing fire this time. The hero of "two worlds," Lafayette, was authorised to call in the aid of three battalions of National Guards, those of St. Roch, St. Honoré, and the Filles-St.-Thomas. At an early hour in the morning of the 22nd while it was still dark, the troops penetrated, Lafayette at their head, into the apartments of the house where the '*Ami*' was printed, seized everything they could lay their hands on, and, at 11 o'clock, after leaving a detachment on guard, the main body returned home, consoling themselves at finding no Marat, by carrying lighted candles at the end of their bayonets and shouting, *Marat à la lanterne*.

The victim's own account of this day's proceedings is as follows, "I was sleeping in a room in a neighbouring street, when a young man attached to my office, came with tears in his eyes to inform me that my house was surrounded by several battalions; my

landlord and his wife also entered my chamber with an air of consternation ; they could not speak, but could only tremble." "Peace," I cried, "it is nothing, leave me alone." I am never more *sang froid* than in the midst of imminent danger. Not wishing to go out *en déshabille* for fear of exciting attention, I carefully made my toilette ; throwing an overcoat over me and covering my head with a round hat, I put on a smiling air and took my departure ; I gained the Gros-Caillon, by passing alongside of the guard sent to arrest me. On the way I sought to distract my companion, and managed to preserve a good humour till about 5 o'clock in the evening, at which hour I awaited the proof of the sheet, containing an account of the famous equipage. No one appearing, I had a presentiment of my impending misfortune, and the rest of the day was passed in sadness. They had got wind of the route I had taken. In the evening the house was invested with spies. I recognised them from behind a *jalousie*. It was suggested to me to escape by the roof on the approach of night, nevertheless, I passed by them in open daylight, giving my arm to a young person who accompanied me and walking leisurely."

"As soon as it grew dark, I repaired to the Grand Basin du Luxembourg. Two friends were waiting there, to conduct me to the house of a lady in the neighbourhood. Finding no one at home, we took a vehicle, and went to seek an asylum at the bottom of the Marais.

"Arrived at the Rue de la Perle, my new host, I find, has company. I observe a stranger. After a quarter-of-an-hour's conversation, I enquire of my host, in a low tone, if he knows this individual? 'As yourself—all right.' I continue the conversation some time longer, and after having partaken of supper, retire to rest. In the middle of the night an *escouade* of cavalry makes halt under my window, but on opening the shutters and looking out, I observe that not one of them has put foot to the ground; so I quietly resume my bed till the next morning." The consequence of all this was to demonstrate the necessity of at once leaving Paris and France—and indeed Marat lost no time in putting this plan into execution. In a few days he was in London.

It may be desirable to corroborate the apparently exaggerated statement given by Marat as to the number of troops sent to arrest him, by that of a Royalist writer. Montjoie, in his "*Histoire de la Conjuraton de Phillippe d'Orleans*," says:—"Lafayette marched against Marat an army of six thousand men, and posted them at the opening of every street; abutting on the house were two pieces of artillery. This war was so extraordinary, that had I not been a witness of it myself, I should never have believed it. <Conceive indeed this 'hero of two worlds' deploying forces so formidable against a man whose only arm was his pen.> While in London Marat wrote the pamphlet entitled the *Appel à la Nation*.

It was most likely shortly after his return to (Paris (May 18th, 1790)) absolutely destitute of means even to establish a press, that the noble and devoted Simonne Evrard resolved to share with him her fortune and her life. Simonne was born at Tournes St. Andrès in 1764. (She was twenty-six years of age, Marat forty-six when they were united.) In spite of the repudiation of relations, in spite of threats of abandonment, she remained his constant companion till his death, and the heroic defender of his memory afterwards.

It was by means of her small fortune that Marat was enabled again to establish his own printing office, and continue the publication of his *Ami* independently of printing firms, who might fail him at any moment.\* Just as with the "People's friend" himself, historians, whenever they have mentioned Simonne Evrard at all, have always made it an occasion of vilifying her, although they can bring no solitary fact in proof of their assertions. The entire fabric of calumny rests upon an incoherent and self-contradictory narrative of Madame Roland, in which she endeavours to defame alike both Simonne and Marat.) It is a noteworthy circumstance that historians, in their excessive zeal to vilify the subject of our narrative, have, by their mutual inconsistencies,

\* About this time Marat commenced a second journal, named the *Junius Français*, after the "English Letters of Junius," but the two papers proved more than he could manage, so the *Junius* stopped at the thirteenth number.

betrayed themselves. One very reliable historian thus sums him up as viciously ascetic—a veritable modern Diogenes. Another very trustworthy authority, as an incarnation of lasciviousness, keeping voluptuously furnished apartments to receive courtezans, &c. According to one writer, he is a raving demagogue, “sticking at nothing;” according to another, a timid and cautious self-seeker. Now all these writers have spoilt their *rôle* by overacting it. Had they been a little more moderate in their statements, these might at least have been reconciled; as it is, their extreme assertions simply negative one another. All calumniators should bear in mind that canon of their art which says, “If you want to damage a man, say what is probable as well as what is true.”

Of the fidelity and unselfish character of Simonne Evrard, the following declaration made by the surviving members of Marat’s family after his death, will, I think, be strong evidence, since they could have had nothing to gain by courting her friendship. It runs as follows:—“Penetrated with admiration and esteem for our dear and worthy sister, we declare that it is to her, the family of her husband owe the preservation of the last year of his life.” After referring to the perils she had borne with Marat, and her devotion to him, it continues, “We declare that it is with satisfaction we fulfil the wish of our brother in recognizing the citizeness Evrard for our sister; that we repudiate those members of

the family who do not share our feelings of esteem and recognition. Given at Paris, 22nd August, in the year II. of the French Republic.—MARIE ANNE MARAT (*femme* OLIVIER), ALBERTINE MARAT, PIERRE MARAT."



## CHAPTER IV.

Less than a month after the re-appearance of the *Ami*, June 10th, 1790, a decree was passed, upon the proposition of the King, fixing the civil list at twenty-five millions. This meant, of course, additional means to crush obnoxious persons, besides additional taxation in a time of scarcity. An indignant war-cry, addressed to all patriots, was immediately raised by Marat at this barefaced attempt at once to exhaust the nation, and trample on the little liberty already won. The municipality finds in this a new pretext for arrest, and Marat is once more environed by a network of spies. The cry of "anarchist" raised by the Government is taken up by "moderate" journals of all shades; indeed, the "People's friend" is left with only one public defender, (he being Camille Desmoulins.) The latter, in conjunction with many of Marat's private friends, urgently exhort him to fly; but in a noble letter, unfortunately too long to quote in full, he replies, asking whether—when one considers the number of men who are annually torn from their families to fight and die for a supercilious royal master, who

cares not a jot for them, yet who go cheerfully, and as a matter of duty it is a greater sacrifice for him, a man without family, to risk a little danger at an imminent crisis to help to save a whole nation from despotism, danger being moreover a condition to which he is by this time pretty well accustomed, since, for eighteen months condemned to every sort of privation, he has rushed from one retreat to another, often unable to sleep two consecutive nights in the same bed (*Ami*, No. 170).

The storm, notwithstanding, blew over without the mandate of arrest being put into execution, but it was not long before Paris once more rang with the name of Marat. The Ambassador of the Court of Vienna requested of the King a free passage through France for the Austrian troops, on their way to Belgium. Marat's ready suspicion, assisted possibly by information received, at once saw in this a stratagem; and, on July 26th, a placard, bearing his signature, was to be seen posted up all over Paris. It was headed, *C'en est fait de nous*,—"It is all over with us," and proceeded to denounce this manoeuvre of the enemy as a plot to crush the revolution by force of arms, and reinstate "Royalism" in all its former glory. The placard terminates with these words, often made a notable point *Pappui* by the calumniators of the people's friend:—"Five or six hundred heads fallen would have assured you repose and happiness; a false humanity has restrained your arm and suspended your blows; it will cost the



life of millions of your brothers."\* Shocking language, truly, for those who shudder and vituperate at the execution of a handful of hostages by men goaded to the last verge of desperation, while they have no word of condemnation for the indiscriminate slaughterers of men, women, and children in the exultation of victory, and no word of sympathy for their victims. It is the privilege of a defender of "order" to murder, at his pleasure, in defence of his "order," and the exercise of this privilege is often a proof of decision and capacity; but when the advocate of "subversive doctrines" dares to raise so much as a finger against his persecutors and those of his party, "Hideous monster! incarnate fiend!" is then the verdict of "Respectability."

It matters not that judgments of this kind are contrary to justice and morality; it being a successful means of throwing dust before the mental vision of that large section of the public, which does not enter into the facts of the case—setting impartial truth at defiance, and creating a howl in the interest of "order,"—is likely to continue, like many other things, because it pays; and so justice and morality must bow their heads for the present to the *status quo*.

Apart from these considerations, the question arises, Did Marat, in this and certain other declarations of a similar nature, mean anything more than

\* It is alleged by Camille Desmoulins that Marat on one occasion repudiated the authorship of the placard, in the course of conversation, but this assertion would hardly seem to be borne out by facts.

to destroy a sense of fatal security in the minds of Royalist plotters? I fancy no impartial mind, on reviewing the evidence, will think he did. *Apropos* to this subject, I cannot do better than quote a few passages from Mr. Bowen Graves' masterly article in the *Fortnightly Review* for January, 1874, the only defence of Marat, as far as I am aware, that has hitherto appeared in English, and which, in point of conclusiveness, leaves nothing to be desired.

“What can give a more hideous picture of human nature than Marat's estimate, as we find it in Michelet, of the number of heads demanded by the public weal as exactly two hundred and seventy-three thousand! It would impress us far less with horror if the number had been a million at once. A thousand, and hundred thousand, or a million, may be figures of speech: there is no figure of speech suggested by that horribly detailed two hundred and seventy-three thousand. Now, the fact which is really remarkable is, that no such number, or anything like it, occurs in any of Marat's writings. The detail is imported from without. The credit of its origination belongs to Barbaroux; the finishing touch—the last embellishment, the three—is M. Michelet's own.

“Threats of bloodshed are, no doubt, only too frequent, but always in language such as, to an impartial mind, excludes the idea of calculation. One day it is ten thousand heads that must fall, the

next it is one hundred thousand, a third it drops to fifty thousand, a fourth to twenty, and so on. A few months before his death, he tells us in his journal what he meant by them: 'I used them,' he says, 'with a view to produce a strong impression on men's minds, and to destroy all fatal security.' There is nothing to be found in the pages of the *Ami du Peuple* approaching in cold bloodthirstiness what is to be met with repeatedly in the *Actes des Apôtres*, for example, or the *Journal de la Cour et de la Ville*, or, to take another example, 'it will cost ten thousand lives to save the country,' says one man. "When compromise was proposed," says another, "to the effect that the government should enter Paris, but not the army, I replied that, if it should cost a river of blood, the army should enter first."—*Fortnightly Review*, January, 1874."

The Commune and Marat are monsters without a parallel, but M. Thiers, the author of the above declaration, is a champion of respectability and moral order.

In the placard *C'en est fait*, Marat proposes what was afterwards put into effect by the unanimous voice of the popular party, namely, to imprison the royal family in the Tuilleries, as some sort of safeguard against the plottings of Royalists. This placard was, however, sufficient to raise a storm again about him, in which he was forsaken by all, even to Desmoulins. To us, who can detect no direct evidence of any secret purpose in the move-

ment of the Austrian troops, the passionate declamation contained in the above placard seems somewhat exaggerated, but we must in all historical judgments bear in mind the circumstances as well as the moral conditions of a time. France was at this period breathing a perfect atmosphere of "plots," real and imaginary. The flocks of emigrant "aristocrats" from across the Rhine were known to be in active correspondence with their brethren in France. The European courts—notably that of Austria (personally related to the Queen)—were anxiously watching events in the interest of Royalism. Surely it was, to say the least, very natural to suspect any attempt to introduce Austrian troops on to French soil. A much less suspicious circumstance would have raised the suspicions of a much less suspicious "patriot" than the "people's friend" in those days. Every attempt was made to stop the circulation of the placard and to seize the person of Marat, who was in consequence compelled more than ever to conceal himself.

A week after appeared another, *On nous endort prenons-y-garde*. This was a denunciation of the conduct of the Châtelet in prosecuting those who had taken part in the famine insurrection of the preceding October. It endeavours to shew that the descent upon Versailles was an act of necessity on the part of the populace; and was justified by its results; from that time the previous scarcity of bread having become, to a great extent, ameliorated. On

the 25th of August appeared yet another placard—*C'est un beau rêve gare au réveil*,—"It is a fine dream, beware of the awakening." This time it was no public event or unjust proceeding that called for comment or remonstrance; but a report, ingeniously circulated by the enemies of the revolution, that the provinces were vehemently demanding a return to "order," that the existing misery of the working classes was entirely caused by the disorders of the time, &c. It proceeds to refute in detail these assertions, and terminates with a passionate appeal to the nation to take counsel of its misfortunes.

It was about this time that an event occurred in the North-East district which filled all France with horror. On the 29th of August certain regiments forming part of the garrison at Nancy, being reported in a state of mutiny, Commandant Bouillé, cousin of Lafayette, is despatched to restore "order," this he effects on the 31st, but at the cost of a frightful massacre. It should be observed that most of the troops he employed were Germans. Marat's cry of alarm was again thrown into the form of a placard. *Affreux Réveil*,—"Terrible awakening,"—it runs "Behold the horrible catastrophe, that I so long have predicted! inevitable consequence of your want of foresight and your blind security. Nothing equals the criminality of the commandant and officers of Nancy, unless it be the unscrupulousness of the Assembly, in launching these horrible decrees, acts of madness, or rather acts of barbarity, deserving the

severest punishment. Crush beneath your feet those who would light the torch of civil war, invite the provinces without delay to name other deputies, install them in the senate and drive away with ignominy those who now disgrace their office. Disarm the German satellites, who murder your compatriots, &c." Space does not permit me to enter at length into this question of Nancy. Our journalist devotes several numbers, some double ones, to proving, that the conduct of the authorities, *i.e.*, Lafayette and company, even from their own point of view, was altogether unnecessary and unjustifiable, and further that the garrison in the first instance had good cause for complaint, and were fully justified in taking up the position they did. "Stupid despots," he writes, "will you never learn that it is by honour and justice, those all-powerful divinities, that one should rule free and sentient beings? What could not you have obtained from a peaceable citizen and an intrepid warrior, had you known how to elevate his heart! Will you then never honour human nature, and always prefer the pleasure of tyrannising over slaves to the privilege of commanding free men?"

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This affair contributed considerably to extend Marat's influence; and, at the same time, to intensify the hatred of his enemies, and increase his persecutions.

Amid all these, there was one circumstance from which he might derive some satisfaction, both

personal and public. On the 6th of September, just a week after the Nancy massacre, the Assembly abolished the Court of the Châtelet; the Court with which the same Assembly had so often united in persecuting the author of the *Ami*, and through the *Ami* of so many denunciations of its conduct and decrees. But although the Châtelet was abolished, domiciliary visits and official decrees of arrest were by no means at an end. Early on the 15th, Lafayette having learnt the previous day that a number devoted to an examination of his conduct was in active preparation, a visit is made to the office of the *Ami du Peuple*; everything is ransacked, seized, or destroyed, even to the mattress, from which the manager, Sieur André, has just risen, which is ripped up with bayonets. The "People's friend," *in propria persona*, is, however, not to be found, he having long since been compelled to abandon the upper earth as a place of residence, for subterranean retreats.\* Where he is it is found impossible by threats or otherwise, to extort from Sieur André. Another formidable attempt at arrest with the same results was made by Lafayette on the 14th of the following December.

\* One of his most frequent places of concealment was the cellars underneath the Cordelier's club. He was also sheltered by personal friends, among others, Legendre, and Boucher St. Sauveur, &c.

## CHAPTER V.

During the year 1791 Marat was occupied with the same struggle as he had been the previous year, the struggle with the chicanery of the constitutionalists. It is expressed in these words:—"The question is <not how to remove your old tyrants, but how to exterminate the new ones> that you may live as free and happy men. *Ami*, No. 224. Space will not allow me to do more than touch upon the chief events of the year, as far as they concern Marat. It opened as gloomily as the preceding closed. In the attempted arrest of the 14th of December previously, from which Marat escaped only owing to his careful concealment, three battalions had been as on another occasion marched to the supposed residence of the object of official vengeance. There was now owing to the failure of this undertaking, a particular battallion that of Notre Dame, charged upon oath, with the mission to assassinate the "peoples friend" wherever they might find him. But even among those of whom Lafayette believed himself most sure, Marat had some friends. On the 14th he had received intimation from several officers of the intended expedition, seventeen letters



in all. "Parisians," he writes, "with such men one need not despair."

On the night of the 21st of June, occurred the memorable flight of the king to Varennes; Marat had foreseen that this would be attempted with a view, as he thought, of leaving a free passage for foreign intervention. *Ami* 434. Some days before this event he wrote passionately in favour of *déchéance*. He had been for some time practically republican; the course of events having more and more weaned him from the limited-monarchy opinions expressed at the outset of the revolution. After the flight to Varennes, republican ideas became general with the popular party. The restoration of the monarchy, which Carlyle compares to an inverted pyramid, finding little favour except with the constitutionalists, naturally desirous of retaining their places and revenues. A petition for *déchéance* was accordingly drawn up, and a meeting convoked and held in the Champ de Mars, on Sunday the 17th of July, just one year and three days after the ceremony of the inauguration of the Constitution.

Towards night-fall Lafayette appeared at the head of 10,000 National Guards, accompanied by cannon, &c., with the intention of dispersing the populace; Maire Bailly bearing the red flag, symbol of martial law so small, however, as the witnesses declared as to enable him to carry it in his pocket. Without waiting for the three legal and prescribed summonses, the guards fired at Lafayette's

command, first into the air, and then upon the multitude. Some hundreds fell killed or wounded, and the rest were dispersed by the cavalry. After this affair there was a general flight of journalists; the only remaining one, being the inexorable "People's friend," but he, as outspoken and energetic as ever. In his number of the 20th July, we read, "The blood of old men, women, and children, massacred around the altar of the country smokes still, it cries for vengeance, and the infamous legislator offers congratulations, and votes public thanks to those cruel tyrants, to those cowardly assassins, &c." But Marat had counted without compositors and without distributors. After the bold article of which the above is the commencement, these, one and all, deserted him—the panic was complete.

The next number of the *Ami* appeared on the 10th of August. In September, the election for the new "Constituant" Assembly, which was to succeed the then expiring "Legislative" Assembly, were to be held. Marat intended, on the opening of the new legislature, to discontinue his journal—as he entertained some hopes that deputies, more in harmony with the principles of the revolution, might be returned. He, however, closes his number of the 8th of September, with the following letter.

*Letter of the Author to the Conscript Fathers:—*

"My compliments to the august assembly. Thanks to the sublime constitution, Gentlemen, which you have given to France, there is no more

water to drink ; and as there are the galleys to gain, in defending the rights of the nation, the "People's friend" has the honour to inform you that he is on the point of renouncing the foolish project of immolating himself, for the public safety, and to think in future of nothing further, than how he may rebuild his fortune, having been reduced to the greatest straits in pursuit of this insane object," &c.

He seems, at this time, to have been alternating very much between hope and despair, in his views of public affairs generally, and especially as to the character and action of the chamber about to be elected. Three days previously to the letter just quoted, he had said, "before quitting the pen, to which I have consecrated three years in the defence of the rights of the nation and of public liberty, my last look will be for the welfare of the people." The number for September the 21st contains "The last farewell of the People's friend to his country." In it he relates his mode of life since adopting the career of journalist. He had resolved with the cessation of his journal again to return to London. The number of the following day is dated from Clermont. It relates how in the diligence he encountered five "Emigrants." He learnt from their conversation of the means used to obtain passports, also of their designs of revenge for "Varennes," when they should return, as they confidently hoped before long. No. 559 is dated from Amiens ; it treats of the famous decree against the titles of the

nobility. "If justice had not interdicted this stroke of authority to the legislator, one would have thought, common-sense would have made its folly manifest." He concludes by remarking, it were better, instead of suppressing titles, to compel the bearers always to carry them in public, to the intent they might be known, and shunned by all true patriots.

On his journey our traveller had a narrow escape of being arrested. Alighted at the Hôtel d'Angleterre, at Amiens, he hears a police agent say, close to his side, "It is he—I recognise him." No doubt there was an amnesty; but the "People's friend" knew he was always a good prize. He feigns not to see anything, walks leisurely, and suddenly disappears behind a hedge. A shepherd passing, he requests to be reconducted on the road to Paris by a circuitous route, as he had abandoned the intention of proceeding to London. The man offered him as a guide a patriot, an old French Guard. The brave fellow desired nothing better; so, Marat having donned the habit of a peasant, behold the two *en route*. At Beauvais a cabriolet is obtained, and on the morrow he finds himself again in Paris.

On the first of October the new Constituent Assembly was opened; but its character became very soon apparent. It followed in the steps of its predecessor—continuing the work, and no work, of the Legislative Assembly. Marat's indignation and disgust was such, that, after two months' "wrestling

with principalities and powers, he resolved, for the second time, to leave France, though not before he had cast upon it one more despairing farewell. "Oh, my country, what fearful lot is in store for thee! Oh, that I have been unable to unveil thine eyes! There is nought further to be done to prevent thy ruin, and thy faithful friend has no further duty than to deplore thy sad destinies, and shed tears of blood over thy prolonged disasters."—*Ami*, Dec., 14, 1791.

The next day, December 15th, he left Paris definitely, for London. While there he planned a work, in two volumes, entitled the *Ecole à Citoyen*. The following April (1792) the patriotic societies, at the instigation of the Cordelier's Club, invited the patriotic journalist to return, promising him their support and assistance in the circulation of his journal. The fact that Pétion had replaced Bailly as Maire may have contributed in some measure to induce Marat to accept this proposal, or it may be that his burning zeal could not allow him to rest, and that he had already decided to return to the struggle. Whether or no, we find, on the 12th of April, the criers once more announcing the reappearance of the *Ami du Peuple*, after four months' suspension. At the head of the first seven numbers appeared in full the minute of the Cordelier's Club, in which the "People's friend" was invited to resume his labours. Many things had happened during his absence; among them, a law had been passed declaring

*nobles declared traitors.*

the king's brothers and the emigrants generally, in a state of accusation. This denoted a distinct advance in revolutionary policy. Lafayette was now, moreover, beyond the frontier. On the 20th of April war was declared against Austria, a step greeted with great applause on all sides—each party hoping to gain by it. Our journalist alone saw its folly, and denounced the measure, not merely as a useless expenditure of blood and money, but as a dangerous manoeuvre to distract the people from national affairs and to frustrate or delay the accomplishment of the Revolution. The only means of preventing it would have been “to retain as hostage among us Louis XVI., his wife, his son, his daughter, and his sisters,” and to have held them responsible for the course of events.

—*Ami*, No. 634.

Marat's opinion regarding the war was the beginning of that schism between him and the Girondists, which subsequently assumed such gigantic proportions.

The “Girondins,” or the “Brissotins,” as they were at this time called, from their leader Brissot, were a species of Republican constitutionalists—*Hommes d'Etat*, as Marat characteristically dubs them. Their political programme was federalism.) They were, as it is well known, essentially the most brilliant party in the Assembly; comprising among their number the greatest orators in the country; but they were, withal, simply Rhetoricians, *Bourgeois* politicians, and had no conception whatever of the

vigorous action necessary in the crisis through which France was passing. As a consequence, apart from all consideration of the intrinsic merit of their programme, they were simply an obstruction to the progress and solidarity of the evolution.

In the *seance* of May 3rd, Marat is denounced in the Assembly by the Girondin Deputy Beugnot, as a sanguinary regicide; on account of an article wherein he suspects certain generals of treason, and warns the army to be on its guard. The result is as often before. We read in No. 650: "They have launched against me a decree of accusation; I am ready to appear before any equitable tribunal, but I will not give myself up to tyrants, whose satellites doubtless have orders, if not to murder me during my arrest, at least to keep me confined in a dungeon. Only let the conscript-fathers, who persecute me, cite me before an English tribunal, and I engage, the *procès verbal* of their sitting, in my hand, to get them condemned to gaol as convicts." This of course meant that he intended again to adopt a subterranean life. For a whole week nothing was heard of him. The presses of the *Ami* had been sacked, as in the old Lafayette days. During his concealment his enemies took great pains to circulate a false *Ami*, a number 650, of which he says, "the tasteless and disgusting style of this false and ignoble print, is only suited to the atrocities they would make me advocate, and to the calumnies poured forth in the letter pretended to have been

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addressed to me." After the decree of the 3rd of May, the zeal of Marat's persecutors, became hotter than ever, the result being, that before long his concealment had become habitual, varying only in point of degree. We may judge when the pursuit was hottest, by the *hiati* occurring in the appearance of the *Ami*, thus in June only two numbers saw the light, although important events were taking place; showing that the authorities had been for the nonce successful in closing the mouth of their enemy. From the 7th of July to the 7th of August, ten numbers in all, were published. The memorable 10th of August found Marat still in his concealment. He was not idle, however; before the close of the contest at the Tuilleries, a placard bearing his signature was to be read in all quarters of the city. The following are a few extracts from it. ("The glorious day of the 10th of August, 1792, may prove decisive for the triumphs of liberty, if you know how to profit by your advantages! Dread the reaction; I repeat to you, your enemies will not spare you should they come back to power." "No one has a greater horror of bloodshed than myself, but to prevent its flowing in streams, I exhort you to sacrifice some drops.") But above all things hold the king, and his wife and son as hostages, and till the moment that his definitive sentence shall be pronounced, let him be shown at least four times daily to the people. Tremble, tremble, lest you let slip this unique opportunity which the tutelar genius of

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France has secured to you of escape from the abyss, and assurance of liberty." Instant dissolution of the Assembly is advocated, and arrest of reactionary members.

In this placard is to be found again enunciated the principle of revolutionary policy before alluded to. The perhaps somewhat summary sacrifice of two or three ringleaders of reaction, whose past conduct has proved them simply either ruthless caterers for their own particular class, or unprincipled plotters for private interests, rather than a straining of the principle of 'mercy' (in itself one of the great tests of progress) into an excuse for allowing such men as this the opportunity of violating in the most flagrant manner (though with all the odour of respectability), the commonest principles of humanity and justice. (The history of French revolutions has taught the wisdom of this **NOT?** maxim, and on more than one occasion has its neglect caused 'streams' of French blood to flow)

## CHAPTER VI.

{ WITH the 10th of August a new era commenced. Royalism was finally and completely overthrown, and the Republic *de facto* established. The day following, Marat, emerging from his cellar, indemnified himself, to some extent, for his own stolen presses, by demanding, and obtaining, those of the Royal printing office. His journal reappeared on the 13th; the number, treating of the proposed election, of a National Convention.

Early in September he was nominated member of the Committee of Public Safety; a body whose function it was to search out, and arrest, conspirators. Its members were nominated by the commune, whose decrees it was charged with executing. The "People's friend" had a *Tribune particulière* assigned to him. <The 10th of August thus raised him from a fugitive in a cellar, to the occupant of an important public post.> "Marat is the conscience of the *Hôtel-de-Ville*," said one of its members. As a member of the municipality, Marat has received a full share of responsibility for the September massacres. Did he use his influence in any way direct or indirect to instigate the summary executions, which took

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place during the first week in September, outside the prisons of Paris? On this point I will again quote Mr. Bowen-Graves. "Marat's part in these last terrible events has been constantly and grossly misrepresented. He had long foreseen and foretold what would happen if foreign invasion found Paris in a state of chaos. The predicted crisis had now arrived. On the east the Germans are at the Thermopylae of France. A step more, the Revolution sinks beneath them. On the west the standard of the Vendean insurrection is already raised. Between the two lies Paris, in hardly dormant civil war. Royalty is overthrown, but royalism is rampant. The Swiss guards, the rank and file have fallen, sacrificed to their fidelity to a master who had deserted and forgotten them; but officers, courtiers, *chevaliers de poignard*, are lively as ever—intriguing, plotting, vapouring in street and café, openly rejoicing in the triumph which German armies will give them; measuring, compasses in hand, the distance between Verdun and Paris. The newly-formed tribunal is inefficient; acquitting men, notorious for their part in the intrigues, which were the cause of all the evil. Lafayette, with his army, is believed to be marching on Paris to restore the monarchy. Republicans knew well enough what such restoration would mean. The horrors of Montauban, Arles and Avignon are written in history, to show how well-founded were their fears. And in the midst of all this came the tidings, that the one strong place

between Paris and the enemy, is besieged; that its resistance is a question hardly even of days. Then, while the tocsin was clanging, and the alarm cannon roaring, and the Girondin minister could find nothing better to suggest, with his unseasonable classicism, than carrying into the South the statue of liberty, Paris answered with one instinct to Danton's thundering defiance, and perpetrated that tremendous act of self-defence at which we shudder to this day. The reaction hid its head and cowered; the coalitions shrank back appalled; and within the month, the ragged volunteers of the Republic were hurling back, from the passes of the Argonne, the finest soldiery which Europe could produce."

The whole position of affairs is summed up in the passages quoted. The September massacres were the work of a populace driven to a despairing frenzy by the combination of circumstances above enumerated. They were not the work of one party, much less of one man; but an ebullition of popular fury, acquiesced in, as a terrible necessity, by all parties and by all the leading men of the Revolution. It matters not that the actual perpetrators were comparatively few in number; this indeed the rather proves the massacres simply the expression of a wide-spread public feeling, as otherwise they would certainly not have been tolerated, when a single corps of the 50,000 National Guards, then in Paris, could have arrested or dispersed at the shortest notice, all engaged in them.

It matters not that the Girondin party subsequently

Sept.  
massacres

endeavoured to make the Commune the scape-goat in the matter; this was an obvious piece of party tactics. They themselves must have considered the massacres necessary at the time, otherwise as Marat himself expressed it, their inaction would have been the most heinous of crimes.

Were these summary executions under the peculiar circumstances excusable? \* This is a question unnecessary to enter upon at length in this place; there can be no doubt, they were really believed at the time to be the only alternative to the annihilation of the Revolution, and of all who had taken any part in it, and the subjugation of France by the European coalition. It is in this light we must regard the letter to the departments, justifying the massacres, signed by the members of the commune, Marat among them.† This letter was an atrocious document, many will say.

\* A distinction must be made between the mere fact of summary executions of conspirators; which was all the leading men desired, and the atrocities attending the massacres, solely the work of the frenzied creatures actually engaged in them.

† The part especially relating to the massacres is as follows:—The Commune of Paris hastens to inform its brethren of the Departments that a portion of the furious conspirators detained in the prisons have been put to death by the people, an act of justice which seemed indispensable to hold in terror the legions of traitors hidden within their walls at the moment when it was about to march on the enemy, and doubtless the whole nation after the long series of treasons that have led it to the brink of the abyss will hasten to adopt a measure so necessary to the public safety and all the French will cry like the Parisians, "We are marching on the enemy, but we will not leave behind us brigands, who would murder our wives and children."

Under the peculiar circumstances, in which it was written, one might well be disposed, to excuse it ; however, be it so ; it was an atrocious document, and "September" was inexcusable. Yet does it not seem somewhat singular, that humanity as represented by the bulk of "Respectability," should shudder at, and curse with every epithet of opprobrium the agents of Paris in September 1792, and speak with the utmost respect of the agents of Versailles, in May 1871 ? September 1792—1,080 or at most 2,000 slain, all after some trial, however brief, by a populace in a burst of despairing rage ; May 1871, obscure prisoners of war maltreated and slaughtered daily in small numbers for a month,—this consummated in the moment of victory, by a carnage estimated officially at 15,000 ? Yet viewed in its true light, it is not at all strange. To the mind of "Respectability" the difference consists precisely in this,—that in one case the victims were respectable well-to-do upholders of "order," while the perpetrators had emerged from the depths of St.-Antoine,—on the other, the victims were only poor workmen, National Guards, while their murderers were acting under instructions from a government representing religion and property.

That Marat personally and directly caused the death of a single individual, during the September affair, we have not a shadow of proof ; indeed the negative evidence makes all the other way, for in none of the three numbers of the *Ami* published

between the 10th of August, and the first week in September, do we find any sign of a desire to instigate lawless vengeance. There is a continuous goading on of the tribunals to definite and decided action. "Hasten the trial of the traitors imprisoned in the Abbaye. If the sword of justice, at this late period, do but strike these plotters and hypocrites, we shall hear nothing more said about popular executions." Here and there a hint, that if the appointed tribunal continues flagrantly to miscarry, justice must be secured by other means; beyond this there is nothing to give colour to any assumption of personal complicity in the events we have been considering.

Marat was elected on the eleventh of the month of October member of the National Convention. From that time the *Ami du Peuple* ceased to exist, and its place was taken by a new journal headed, *Journal de la République Française, par Marat, Ami du Peuple, Député à la Convention Nationale*, with a new motto, *Ut redeat miseris abeat fortuna superbis*. Marat's election, as might be imagined, caused intense vexation and disquietude to the Girondin party, then in office, who dreaded lest his influence as an orator, should equal that he had already acquired as a journalist.

It was, however, a fortnight before war was overtly declared. The occasion of the first skirmish was the sitting of September 24th, in the debate, which preceded the passing of a law against provokers to

assassination, when the "People's friend" was indirectly, but very unmistakably indicated; indeed, the law itself was really aimed at him. The day following the (25th) a furious onslaught was made. Petion was presiding on this occasion. Merlin opened fire with the words: "I demand, that those who are acquainted with men in this assembly perverse enough to desire a dictatorship or a triumvirate shall point these out, that I may poignard them. I invite Deputy Lasource, who stated yesterday that there existed in this assembly a dictatorial party, to indicate it to me, and I declare myself ready to poignard the first who would arrogate to himself the power of a dictator." A voice shouts out the name of Robespierre. Danton then rises, and, in a short speech, obliquely indicates Marat without naming him. Robespierre follows, and, in a speech of some length, openly renounces the friendship, political and otherwise, of the "People's friend"—both decline all responsibility for the acts of the Commune. Barbaroux then fiercely attacks the Commune, and demands its suppression. Finally, Cambon mounts the tribune, and says, "I have seen placards on the walls of Paris, stating the only means for ensuring public safety to be the triumvirate, and these placards are signed "Marat"—such are the facts. Reply! you who deny the project of establishing a dictatorial authority in Paris."

Marat, hitherto silent, then rose to confront the convention; he declaimed in full the article wherein he had expressed his views respecting a dictator-



ship. *Ami*, 741. The article in question concludes, "*Oh ! peuple babillard, si tu savais agir !*" As soon as he had uttered these words, the assembly was thrown on all sides into violent disorder. Shouts of "to the guillotine" re-echoed from the Girondins: a decree of accusation was about to be launched, when Marat mounted the tribune for the first time, and demanded to be heard.

Silence being in some measure restored, he began, "I have a large number of personal enemies in this Assembly." "All, all!" shouted the Convention, rising to its feet as one man. This interruption subsiding, he continued, fully avowed the article and the placard, and sought to justify the opinions contained in them, as to the desirability in view of the crisis, of one or two competent men whose patriotism and power of determination were alike beyond question, being intrusted with the helm of affairs.\* Such was, he said, his opinion. If it was wrong, it was for the Girondins or other dissentients to refute it: not to endeavour by senseless clamour to prevent his exercising his right of speech as a deputy. He had never conspired, he had never circulated his views in secret, but always proclaimed them "on the housetops," in a public journal, and on

\* Auguste Comte was of a similar opinion. "During the struggle for independence what was wanted was a vigorous dictatorship, combining spiritual with temporal powers; a dictatorship even stronger than the old monarchy, and only distinguished from despotism by its ardour in the cause of progress." *Comte's "Positive Polity,"* vol. i., page 92, translated by Dr. Bridges.

the walls of Paris, with his signature appended to them. He gave them forth as his own views for the acceptance or rejection of his fellow-citizens. Surely he had as great a right to do this as any other patriot. This maiden speech, by no means a short one, and treating of various matters, was not concluded without many interruptions; however, certain deputies secured for him the chance of defending himself, and concluding what he had to say. Just as he had ended, and was about to retire, he drew a pistol from his pocket, exclaiming, "If the decree of accusation had been launched, I would have blown my brains out at the foot of this tribune." "This is the reward of three years of suffering and privation of every kind in the cause of liberty." The trenchant good sense contained in the speech, in the end effectually silenced all gainsayers, and the Convention had no other course (however unwilling it was to adopt it), than to pass to the order of the day.

There is one actor in the scene just described who, on account of his intimate relations with its principal figure, and the calumnies which date their origin from him, should for a moment arrest our attention. This is Barbaroux, a young Marseillais, a pupil of Marat's in his professional days, as well as an enthusiastic friend. Upon the outbreak of the feud between Mountain and Gironde, he sided vehemently with the latter, and at the period our narrative has now reached, had become a bitter enemy of his

former master. This master remarked of him on one occasion, "I have had special relations with Barbaroux at the time when he was not tormented with the mania of playing a rôle. He was then a good young man, who liked studying with me." And in the *Journal de la République*, a private letter was published, addressed to its editor by Barbaroux a few months previously, terminating thus: "Whether I am right or wrong in my opinions, the truth or falsehood of my intellect will never change my heart. I shall always remain at once your friend and companion in misfortune."

Unlike the Girondins, Marat did not wait till his opponents were dead, and defence impossible, before he made his accusations; but Barbaroux published, after the death of the hated *montaignard*, letters pretended to have been received from him, which, if genuine, would have had enormous weight had they been produced during the struggle between Mountain and Gironde, when the latter was raking up every possible circumstance against the "mountaineers" in general, and Marat in particular. They were not then produced, although Barbaroux was among the foremost of his detractors, and for a very good reason, they were at the time non-existent, their origin dating from some period between Barbaroux's flight from Paris and his death in 1794.\*

\* For a full discussion of the relations between Barbaroux and Marat, including an examination into the genuineness of the letters in question, see *Bougart*, *Tome i.*, page 126 *et seq.*

## CHAPTER VII.

THE Girondin's, notwithstanding the *fiasco* of the 26th of September, were not long before they returned to the charge. On October the 8th, the Committee of Public Safety was indicted in the matter of the September administration, the "People's friend," as its chief member, being of course included in this indictment. Valazé made a well-studied speech, asserting that innocent persons had perished in the massacres of that month—a statement somewhat beside the mark, inasmuch as the massacres had neither been ordered nor supervised by the committee, but, as we before remarked, were the culminating point of a popular delirium—the result of the general fever of the epoch being worked upon by a special combination of circumstances. Valazé's speech continued to criticize the conduct of the committee in various matters, notably the arrests preceding the massacres, but as soon as it was concluded, Marat rose, and silenced all further comment by remarking that the time allotted by the convention for the investigation of the papers of the committee was four months, whereas, Valazé, having scarcely had time to glance through them, proceeded at once to make his report.

It was during the month of October that Marat

made his celebrated visit to General Dumouriez, in the *salon* of the comedian Talma. Two Parisian volunteer battalions had been accused of massacring four Prussian soldiers, who had deserted to the French ranks. There was an official report, from the general to the convention, on the subject but no detailed account had been given. The "People's friend" insisted upon having a *procès-verbal* of the whole circumstance. To this end he visited in person all the departments of the war ministry, but no further information could he acquire. Learning, however, that on a particular evening Dumouriez was to be present at a *bal masqué* given by the actor Talma, he resolved to take advantage of this circumstance to obtain a personal interview.

On his arrival at the house, in the company of two friends, he was announced by Santerre (who was acting as gentleman usher on the occasion) in a loud voice. On entering the apartment he discovered numerous Girondins amongst the party. Pressing through the crowd, and stepping up to Dumouriez, he addressed him in the following terms:—

"We are members of the national convention, and we come, sir, to beg you to give us some explanation relative to the affair of the 'two battalions, the *Mauconseil* and the *Republican*,' accused by you of having murdered four Prussian deserters in cold blood. We have searched the offices of the military committee and those of the war department; we cannot there find the least proof of the crime, and nobody can

furnish information on these subjects but yourself. We beg you to say whether you know all the circumstances of the affair."

"Certainly, of my own knowledge."

"Then it is not merely a confidential denunciation made by you on the faith of M. Duchasseau?"

"But, gentlemen, when I assert a thing, I think I ought to be believed."

"Sir, if we thought as you do on that point we should not have come hither. We have great reasons to doubt. Several members of the military committee have informed us that these pretended Prussians were four French emigrants."

"Well, gentlemen, if that were the case?"

"Sir, that would absolutely change the state of the matter. It is the circumstances which provoked the murder that it is important to know. Now, letters from the army state that these emigrants were discovered to be spies, sent by the enemy, and that they even rose against the National Guards."

"What, sir, do you then approve the insubordination of the soldiers?"

"No, sir, I do not approve the insubordination of the soldiers, but I hate the tyranny of the officers. I have too much reason to believe that this is a machination of Duchasseau against the patriot battalions, and the manner in which you have treated them is revolting."

"M. Marat, you are too warm. I cannot enter into explanations with you."

At this juncture Dumouriez walked off, but he was followed by Marat's two friends, while the latter himself had some further conversation with the aide-de-camps and other officers in the *salon*; the visit then terminated.

"I was indignant at all that I heard, and at all the atrocity I suspected, in the odious conduct of our generals. As I could not bear to stay any longer, I left the party, and I beheld with astonishment, in the adjoining room, the doors of which were ajar, several of Dumouriez's heiduks, with drawn swords at their shoulders. I know not what could have been the object of this ridiculous farce; if it was contrived for the purpose of intimidating me it must be admitted that the varlets of Dumauriez entertain high notions of liberty. Have patience, gentlemen, we will teach you to know it. Meanwhile, rest assured your master dreads the point of my pen much more than I fear the swords of his ragamuffins."

This scene would surely be no inapt one for a painter. The "People's friend," short of stature, shabbily-dressed, the very antithesis of his surroundings the brilliantly-lighted ball-room, replete with all the colours of the rainbow; the figure with whom he is conversing bedizened from head to foot with gold lace and insignia, and surrounded by gaily-attired courtisans.

No sooner was the incident brought before the convention than the Gironde became beside itself with rage, even sinking to threats of personal

violence. Indeed, its rage was now fast growing altogether ungovernable, and reckless even of the commonest principles of decency. Gangs of Girondins, National Guards, and Marseillais patrolled the streets, shouting "*La tête de Marat Robespierre et Danton, et de tous ceux qui les défendront. À Gué—*" They stopped under Marat's window in the Rue des Cordeliers, threatening to set fire to the house. Such was the danger as to necessitate the suspension of the *Journal de la République* during the first week in November.

Within the Convention the excitement raged more violently than in the street. The "People's friend" never rose to speak but his voice was instantly drowned by yells and hisses. We read in the *Journal de la République* (No. 46), "I have twice sought to present my views to my colleagues as clearly and simply as possible; but as I was unable to develop them at any length, they have produced no effect; it only remains for me to appear on great occasions to foil the plots of the criminal faction (*i.e.*, the Girondins), and to defend the rights of the people." To show how completely isolated he was, even within the mountain itself, I subjoin an extract from the sitting of the Jacobin's Club, of Sunday, December 23rd. Robert—"It is very astonishing that the names of Marat and Robespierre are always coupled together. Marat is a patriot; he has excellent qualities, I admit—but how different is he from Robespierre? The latter



is discreet, moderate in his means; whereas Marat is exaggerated, and has not that discretion which characterises Robespierre. It is not sufficient to be a patriot; in order to serve the people usefully, it is necessary to be reserved in the means of execution, and most assuredly Robespierre surpasses Marat in the means of execution," &c. *Bourdon*—"We ought long since to have acquainted the affiliated societies with our opinions of Marat. How could they ever connect Robespierre and Marat together? Robespierre is a truly virtuous man, with whom we have no fault to find from the commencement of the Revolution. (Robespierre is moderate in his means, whereas Marat is a violent writer,) who does great harm to the Jacobins (murmurs); and besides, it is right to observe that Marat does us great injury with the National Convention. The deputies imagine that we are partisans of Marat, we are called Maratists; if we show that we duly appreciate Marat, then you will see the deputies draw nearer to the mountain, where we sit, you will see them come into the bosom of this society, you will see the affiliated societies which have gone astray, rally around the cradle of liberty. If Marat is a patriot, he will accede to the motion I am going to make, Marat ought to sacrifice himself to the cause of liberty. I move that his name be erased from the list of members of this society." This motion excited some applause, violent murmurs in part of the hall, and vehement agitation in the tribunes.

*Dufourny*, "I oppose the motion for expelling Marat from the society (vehement applause), I will not deny the difference that exists between Marat and Robespierre. These two writers, who may resemble one another in patriotism have very striking differences. They have both served the cause of the people, but in different ways. Robespierre has defended the true principles, with method, with firmness, and with all-becoming discretion; Marat on the contrary, has frequently passed the bounds of sound reason and prudence. Still though admitting the difference that exists between Marat and Robespierre, I am not in favour of the erasure. It is possible to be just without being ungrateful to Marat—he has been useful to us, he has served the Revolution with courage (vehement applause from the society and tribunes.) There would be ingratitude in striking him out of the list. ("Yes, yes," from all quarters.) I conclude with proposing that the motion of Bourdon be rejected, and that merely a letter be written to the affiliated societies to acquaint them with the difference that we make between Marat and Robespierre. (Applause.) This motion was in the end adopted. As an instance of this debateable Jacobin's influence with the people I may cite on the other hand another incident of a different kind. "It is some days now that I was addressed by some Marseillais with the words, Marat, your party, increases every day—we belong to it. I replied, Comrades, I have no party; I do not wish any, only be happy and free, that is all I desire." *Journal de la République*, No. 80.

( On the occasion of the King's trial, Marat voted "death without respite" in the following terms:—"With the full conviction I have that Louis is the principal author of the misfortunes which caused so much blood to flow on the 10th of August, and of all the massacres which have sullied France since the Revolution—I vote the death of the tyrant within 24 hours." The nation, he said, had a right to pronounce judgment, and Louis had been guilty of what the law held to be the most heinous crime possible to commit, he had sought to betray France into the hands of the European coalition. While proceedings were pending he repeatedly received letters from royalists offering bribes for him to vote in favour of acquittal or banishment, or even to say one word in behalf of the accused,—“If you will but do it we are prepared to lay down a hundred thousand écus.” Our journalist replied in laying these letters before the Committee of public safety; “I am for the people. I shall never be but for them. That is my profession of faith” (*Journal* No. 79).\*

The death of the King brought with it no reconciliation between Mountain and Gironde; indeed, the zeal of parties in the Convention broke out with redoubled fury. Mr. Carlyle remarks that the

\* To shew, however, that Marat had no bitter feeling of prejudice against the royal personage, I may quote what he says in his journal when describing the trial: “*Il s'est comporté à la barre avec décence. Qu'il aurait été grand à mes yeux s'il avait été innocent.*” It is the man who wrote these words who is so often described as destitute of the commonest feelings of humanity.

last act performed in unison by all the parties in the Assembly was the attendance at the funeral of Lepelletier St. Fargeau, who was assassinated in a *café*, by a Royalist, as one of those who had voted "death," on the evening following the King's execution. In this ceremony singular unanimity was displayed, deputies of various shades—Marat among them—making speeches on the occasion.

With the new year, the all-absorbing question had become one of "Mountain" or "Gironde." Outside the walls of the Convention, in the street, the great question was one of bread, within the last few months the scarcity having been steadily on the increase. The *assignats*, or paper-money, had lately much deteriorated in value. The farmers and corndealers refused to sell except at exorbitant prices. Many persons were making capital out of the public calamity. It was these forestallers who roused Marat's indignation to such a fever pitch, and led, on the morning of the 25th, to the publication of that memorable passage in his journal: "In every country where the 'rights of the people' is not an empty phrase, ostentatiously recorded on paper, the sacking of a few shops, at the doors of which the 'forestallers' were hanged, would soon put a stop to those malversations that are driving five millions of men to despair, and causing thousands to perish of want! Will the deputies of the people do nothing more than prate about their sufferings, and never propose any remedy to relieve them?"

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It is easy enough to denounce a passage like the above, as inciting to plunder and massacre, and this has been done hundreds of times by those, who have not the remotest conception of the real character of Marat, or of the motives which inspired his conduct. There has probably never lived a man who so keenly felt the sufferings of his fellow-men. He felt as in his own person the misery of the masses. What wonder then, if this sense led him sometimes to say things which would not have been said by one who had felt less! This moreover, at a time when chronic civil war was the order of the day; at such a highly wrought epoch as that of the French Revolution. The passage quoted must be read side by side with other passages, showing that although the means suggested may have been injudicious and anarchical, the principle involved was one laid down by Marat, years previously. "In a world full of the possessions of others, and where the indigent have nothing to call their own, they are obviously reduced to perish of hunger. Now, since they derive nothing but disadvantages from society, are they obliged to respect its laws? Doubtless, no! If society abandons them they re-enter a state of nature, and when they reclaim with force their rights, which they would not have parted with, except to secure greater advantages, all authority that opposes them is tyrannical, and the judge who condemns them to death is a cowardly assassin." \* The source of in-

\* Plan de Législation Criminelle.

aspiration, from whence this passage is drawn, will be apparent to every one; it will be equally obvious that the passage in the *Journal de la République* is only a deductive application of this principle. Yet even though we may repudiate the method of Rousseau; is not the principle involved defensible on other grounds than those of the "Social contract?" Does not the answer lie in the view we take of the uses of property—unconditionally selfish or conditionally social; if the latter view be adopted, does it not logically follow, that the extraordinary hoarding up of the necessities of life for commercial purposes, in a period of scarcity—or, in other words, the taking advantage of public calamity for purposes of self-aggrandisement, even though it be done under cover of the ordinary laws of trade—is in itself a crime deserving the severest punishment. But it must be borne in mind that the paragraph in question was not the cause of the riots—these had begun some days before. It was hunger, not Marat, which swayed the *queues* at the baker's shops, and made them overflow the neighbouring streets.

M. Bougeart, speaking of this matter, says:—"I know that against death from hunger our profound legislators have invented the bayonet of the gendarme, or the convict's prison. I know that it is good taste, good manners, true religion, sound philosophy, and above all, a guarantee of personal safety to be of the opinion of the legislator; but is it more humane, is it more just? Take note, readers: for so long as

you have not replied, I shall be of the opinion of Marat, and I assure you, in the name of human conscience, I shall make some proselytes."

The following is an epitome of some of the circumstances attending this affair of the "forestallers," or bread riots:—On the 24th February, Procureur Chaumette made a report on the subject of the want of means of subsistence in Paris, before the Council General. He demanded an advance of four millions; the Girondins objected to this, as a special favour shewn to one town. Whilst the debate went on hotly in the Chamber, pillaging of provision shops went on in the street.

The following day, the 25th, there was a deputation to the convention, to protest against the riotous scenes of the previous day. Barrère, who led the debate which followed, spoke of all the troubles as the work of ultra-patriots, hinted at a particularly mischievous ultra-patriot, but did not dare to mention names. Sallis then rose, "I come to denounce to you," said he, "one of the instigators of these troubles, it is Marat." He then read the article in full, containing the passage about the "forestallers." No sooner had he concluded, than the whole assembly rose in indignation. Marat rushed to the tribune and commenced a speech in which was repeated the substance of what he had written a day or two previously in his journal, drawing a difference between the instigators and the real sufferers. It is incontestible he had written, that the capitalists, agents, and

monopolisers, are nearly all supporters of the *ancien régime*. "As I see no chance of changing their hearts—I see nothing but the total destruction of this accursed conspiracy, that could give tranquillity to the state. To-day it redoubles its energy to distress the people by the exorbitant price of bread, the first necessary of life. Since there is no law to punish monopolisers, the people has a right to take justice into its own hands." However dreadful it may sound when enunciated by Marat this is a principle practically adopted under all circumstances where ordinary law is ineffective; only usually in the interest of "property," rather than against its abuse. It should be remembered by those who shudder at the words of Marat, that at this very period, and for long after, even the common law of England caused human beings to be hanged by the dozen every week, for trivial offences, such as stealing a loaf of bread; and yet the supporters and executors of these laws, are not execrated as monsters, but are mildly said to have been unnecessarily severe in their views of justice. Marat, because under extraordinary circumstances, he thought an example necessary, from among those who were reducing the people of Paris to starvation, is denounced as a sanguinary demagogue.

Marat had never learnt the right of property to outrage humanity, any more than he had learnt the right of office, however high, to outrage justice. His principle was, that of him who possessed much,



whether in the shape of wealth or power, much should be required; that wealthy or official criminals deserved a punishment tenfold greater than ordinary criminals.

On the conclusion of his speech Buzot moved the order on the proposition that "M. Marat be decreed accused." "The law is precise," he said, "but M. Marat quibbles about its expressions; the jury will be embarrassed how to act, and we have no wish to give M. Marat a triumph in the very face of justice." Several propositions were then made, a resolution being ultimately passed, that all the instigators of the riots should be without distinction cited before the ordinary tribunals. "Good," exclaimed Marat, "then pass an Act of Accusation against myself that the Convention may prove it is devoid of all shame."

Great excitement ensued on the utterance of these words, but it was ultimately adopted that Marat should be sent, with the remaining accused, before the ordinary tribunals; the executive power, however, in as far as the former was concerned, did not pursue the matter any further. The two following numbers of the *Journal de la République* are devoted to explanations of his conduct in the matter, and to a discussion on the causes of the famine. "The cause of this scourge which distresses us lies in the mass of paper money (*assignats*), of which the value diminishes in inverse ratio to its multiplication. Now, diminution in value implies an increase in the price of necessities; soon they will be so high that it will be

impossible for the indigent to obtain them. . . . I foresaw these disorders three years ago, and I then did all in my power to oppose the system of *assignats*—above all, of *assignats* of small value.\* It is not by petty expedients that one succeeds in remedying the unfortunate consequences of a fundamentally vicious measure. The only effectual one is that which I proposed at the time—viz., to cancel the national debt, by paying without delay the creditors of the state, each with a national bond . . . rather than set afloat a large quantity of forced paper money, of which the least inconvenience is the discredit the want of public confidence inseparable from it, invariably entails," &c., &c.

\* In his pamphlets against Necker and also in the *Ami du Peuple*.

## CHAPTER VIII.

EARLY in March the *Journal de la République* ceased to exist, owing to the fact that Lacroix accused its editor of carrying on a profession—that of a journalist, while he was at the same time fulfilling the office of deputy to the Convention, it being illegal for a deputy to engage in any other occupation. Marat deftly parried this stroke by altering the name of his paper to that of *Publiciste de la République Française. Observations aux Français, de Marat, Ami du Peuple, Député à la Convention Nationale*. Of course no one could object to a deputy merely publishing his observations to his constituents, so with this the matter dropped.

A somewhat singular incident occurred at the sitting of the 13th of March. A section of volunteers presented itself at the bar of the Convention, demanding amongst other things a decree of accusation against Dumouriez and his *état major*; this would have been the height of inexpediency, inasmuch as Dumouriez was just at this time in the midst of his conquests, being about to enter Holland. Marat, commenting on the object of this deputation, remarked, "I have already exposed these atrocious

plots, the political *liaisons* of Dumaouriez, his relations with the court; I nevertheless regard him as intimately bound up with the public safety since the 10th of August, and more particularly since the head of the tyrant has fallen beneath the sword of the law. He is bound to us by the success of his arms, and I appear in this tribune to combat this insensate motion, as well as to raise my voice against perfidy towards a general. If the proposition were adopted, it would be equivalent to opening our doors to the enemy;” passing on to another part of the petition, he says, “I demand that the petitioners read the article of their petition, in which they desire the heads of Gensonne, Negniard, and Guadet (Girondin deputies), atrocious crime tending to the dissolution of the Convention, and the loss of the country (unanimous applause). I have already raised my voice against these assassins. I have been to the popular society of the Cordeliers; I have there preached, and confounded these orators led on by the aristocracy.” At an early opportunity, however, he again mounted the tribune to expose the dangers menacing the country from the Girondin party, which he supposed meditated a *coup d'état*. This story is a good one as exhibiting Marat in his true light, not as painted by prejudiced historians—a man whose sole aim was the salvation of liberty—not a mere partisan but capable of calmly estimating what was expedient as well as what was just.

It was not long after this that the final breach

between Mountain and Gironde took place. (The last important act of the Girondist administration was the accusation and trial of Marat.) It had been their aim, as will have been seen, to bring this about, ever since the opening of the convention, and after the expiration of six months they succeeded. Marat had for a month past written repeatedly and with increasing severity against the chicanery of the Girondist faction, and in No. 156 of the *Publiciste* had drawn a parallel between its conduct and that of Dumouriez who had, by this time, reached the lowest stage of his unpopularity, having fled across the frontier and been declared *hors de la loi*. On the 8th of April a deputation from the section *Bon Conseil* entered the Hall of the Convention to petition for the accusation of certain prominent Girondin deputies. Paris was shortly to pronounce the fate of the whole party, but it did not contemplate succumbing without a desperate struggle. In the debate which followed the presentation of the petition, Guadet, one of the deputies designated therein, spoke thus:—"Listen to what Marat says after the scenes of the pillage of the provision shops. One has indeed reason to be astonished that the people should have risen for sugar and coffee. When the people do rise, it is necessary for them to be terrible in their vengeance, so many enemies have they to overthrow." Guadet then read the following, a manifesto of Marat evoked by Dumouriez's threat to march on Paris delivered on the 27th of March, and by his subsequent desertion:—

*"The Society of the Friends of Liberty to its Brethren  
in the Departments."*

"Friends, we are betrayed ! To arms ! To arms ! The hour is come when the defenders of the country must either conquer, or bury themselves beneath the ashes of the Republic. Frenchmen, never was your liberty in greater peril. Our enemies have now put the finishing stroke to their black perfidies, and to consummate them, Dumouriez, their accomplice, is about to march upon Paris. The manifest treason of the generals in league with him has not admitted of a doubt, but that the plan of rebellion, and this insolent boldness, are directed by the criminal faction, which has, until the decisive moment, maintained him, and which has deceived us as to his conduct ; the menaces, the defeats, the plots of this traitor, of whose villainy in placing under arrest four commissaries of the convention, which he would have attempted to dissolve, are sufficiently well known. But brothers and friends, your greatest dangers are in the midst of you. It is in the Senate that parricidal hands would tear out your vitals ! Yes, the counter revolution is in the Government, in the National Convention. But already indignation inflames your courageous citizenship. Come, then, Republicans, let us arm !"

On the conclusion of the quotation, Marat contents himself with uttering the simple words, "It is true."

A general shout of "to the Abbaye!" resounds from all sides.

Valazé observes that the address was being circulated in the departments under the signature of Marat. Marat ascends the Tribune.

"What is the use of this talk?" he exclaims. They seek to deceive you with a chimerical conspiracy, in order to smother up a conspiracy unhappily too real. There is, doubtless, no more revoking it. Dumouriez has himself put the seal to it, in declaring his intention of marching on Paris to secure the triumph of the faction calling itself the only sensible party in the Assembly, against the patriots of the Mountain."

Danton then spoke, urging the sacredness of a deputy, and suggesting that the accusations of Marat against the Girondists, and of the Girondists against Marat, should be alike referred to the same committee for consideration, and concluding, "If Marat is culpable, he has no intention of escaping you;" in which statement the latter acquiesced. Fearing lest the opportunity of realising their intentions should slip out of their hands, the Girondists rallied to the charge in the person of their deputy, Fonfrède, who, in a violent speech, after accusing Marat of every conceivable journalistic crime, moved a decree of accusation. Considerable discussion followed, but eventually the decree was referred to a committee for consideration, and Marat voted meanwhile to be placed under provisional arrest at the Abbaye.

Violent murmurs from the tribunes greeted this decision. A copy of the decree was immediately handed to the chief official on guard in the hall, and the "People's friend" was directed to the door. Patriots on all sides descended from the benches into the body of the building. They declared he should not be summarily arrested. The sentinels endeavoured to prevent his leaving the hall. The officer in possession of the decree was fetched. It was found to be unsigned either by the President or the Minister of Justice, and was therefore invalid. Thereupon the accused left the hall, accompanied by a large crowd. It must be remembered that the manifesto to the departments constituted the main count of the indictment as submitted to the committee for consideration. The following day, on the reporter re-reading it to the Convention, it was greeted with unanimous applause from the Mountain, large numbers of deputies crowding to the bureau to affix their signature to it. The Girondist conspirators had conjectured that it might possibly have to be erased from the charge sheet, so they had supplemented it with two new accounts of accusation; the first based on an article recommending the dissolution of the Convention, and the second on the old affair of the forestallers unsuccessfully handled by them on a former occasion. The voting took place by *Appel nominal* and the decree of accusation was carried by a large majority. Marat still continued the publication of his paper, although daily awaiting a summons. This did not



arrive till the 22nd, and then only on great pressure from without, as the Girondins were anxious to postpone the hearing of the case till they could "pack" the tribunal with their own men.

On the morning of the 23rd, a notice of the fact appeared in the *Publiciste*, "People, to-morrow your incorruptible defender will present himself before the Revolutionary tribunal. He has always wished your happiness, his innocence will triumph. His enemies will be confounded. He will come out of the struggle more worthy of you and will console himself in this new trouble by the hope of the advantages the cause of liberty, and of the country will derive from it."

On the evening of the 23rd Marat constituted himself a prisoner. He was accompanied by numerous colleagues of the Convention, by a Colonel of the National Guard, &c.

The next day, the 24th, the trial came on. The hall of the tribunal was early crowded, many persons having remained there from over night, to ensure for themselves good places. On the proceedings commencing, Marat introduced himself with the words:

"Citizens, it is not a criminal whom you see before you, it is the apostle and tyrant of liberty; it is only a group of factious and rigid, who have obtained this decree of accusation."

The act was then read out to be examined. The audience, being, the prisoner turned to the "Citizens!"

cause is yours. I defend my country ; I request you to preserve the most profound silence, to deprive our enemies of the opportunity of saying that the court had been influenced in any way." On being asked by the president whether he had any remark to make he recounted in a short and concise speech, greeted with unanimous applause, his various services to the revolution, from the publication of the 'Chains of Slavery,' which had gone not a little way to prepare it, up to that time." Examined as to each article of the indictment, he refuted the idea of there being any criminal intention in anything he had written, and when asked finally whether he had anything further to say in his justification, in a speech of some length he ruthlessly criticised and exposed the administration of the Girondins — especially their conduct towards the chiefs of the Mountain, the Commune, and the Sections. He also dwelt on the fact that his accusers had been compelled by popular pressure to abandon the original basis of the indictment and to substitute for this two new, or, rather, old charges revived, which had nothing whatever to do with it, thereby exhibiting the malicious intent actuating them. " Full of confidence in the judgment, equity, and good citizenship of the tribunal, I myself desire the most rigid examination of this affair. Strong in the testimony of my conscience as to the rectitude of my intentions, and the purity of my citizenship, I do not ask for indulgence, but only for the most rigid justice. . . ." " I desire a consecutive reading of

the denounced numbers, for it is not from isolated and excised passages that one can judge the meaning of an author; it is only by reading what precedes and what follows that we can estimate his intentions rightly. . . . If, after such a perusal, there remain any doubts, I am here to dispose of them."

The President then put the usual questions to the jury, who, after an absence of three-quarters of an hour, returned into court with an acquittal couched in the most laudatory terms. Marat then, turning to the Court, said, "Citizen jurors, and judges who compose the revolutionary tribunal, the lot of the traitors to the nation is in your hands; protect the innocent and punish the guilty, and the country will be saved."

Scarcely was the acquittal pronounced than shouts of applause resounded from court, from staircases, from ante-chambers, and from corridors. As the news spread, the crowds outside in the street took up the joyful acclamation, and it was with difficulty the "People's friend" resisted being borne aloft shoulder high by enthusiastic patriots. Crowds thronged the streets between the Palais de Justice and the hall of the Convention. A chair was procured, and the "People's friend" was carried along amid deafening shouts, crowned with oak garlands (which he was compelled to wear, notwithstanding his having repudiated them when first offered). Never was such a triumph, known before in Paris. The crowds reached the Convention doors, forced their way in,

and bore Marat in triumph to President Lasource's chair. A sapper named Rocher took upon himself the part of spokesman, and thus addressed him—

“Citizen president, we return to you our brave Marat. We well know how to confound all his enemies. I have already defended him at Lyons, and I shall defend him here, and the first who would take the head of Marat, must first of all take the head of the sapper.”

Permission to defile was accorded; men, women, and children rushed in shouting, “Long live the Republic, the Mountain, and Marat!”

Marat ascended the tribune. “Legislators, the proofs of good citizenship, and of joy which resound throughout this building, are a homage rendered to the National representation, to a colleague in whose person the sacred rights of a deputy have been violated. I have been perfidiously inculpated; a solemn judgment has assured the triumph of my innocence; I bring you back a pure heart, and I shall continue to defend the “Rights of man,” of the citizens and of the people, with all the energy nature has given me.”

○ From that day the fate of the Gironde was sealed. At the same time, the people of Paris recognised at last, their friend at his real worth. His accusers would have killed him, but instead, they lifted him to the pinnacle of popularity. Paris rang with his praises, and not merely Paris, for congratulations poured in on all sides from the departments. At

the same time Girondism was spreading rapidly, especially in the South-East. At Lyons, 800 patriots had been massacred by the upholders of senatorial and bourgeois despotism, possibly assisted from behind by the remaining sycophants of aristocratic and Royalist despotism.



## CHAPTER IX.

On the 16th of May, Isnard was elected President of the Chamber. About the same time, the Girondists appointed a commission of twelve to examine into the acts of the Commune, which had been accused, among other things, of imprisoning a *Juge de Paix*.

This commission consisted of six Royalists, three Girondins, and three undecided members. It commenced by arresting the president of a section. Receiving support and approval from its nominators in this action, it continued in the same course, imprisoning Substitute Hébert, whom, however, it was compelled to release the following day. It doubled the guard round the Convention Hall, taking good care to compose it of reactionary battalions, &c. Marat opened the sitting of the 27th of May by moving its dissolution.

"They have sought," he says, "to deceive the people with an imaginary conspiracy to assassinate the *hommes d'état*.\* No proof of such a conspiracy

\* The Girondins having pretended that the Mountain and the Jacobins were plotting an insurrection in which to immolate them.

exists, or has ever existed." He asked what other end the Commission of twelve served, but the oppression of patriots, at the same time uttering the prophetic words, "if the patriots are driven to insurrection it will be your fault." "In conclusion, I demand that the commission be suppressed as the enemy of liberty, and as tending to provoke that insurrection of the people only too likely to occur."

A section then presents itself demanding the citation of the members composing the Commission before the Revolutionary tribunal, in company with the twenty-two principal Girondin deputies. The president, Isnard, replies that the Convention will not be intimidated into any action in the matter, to which Danton, "such impudence is too much for us, we shall resist." A vote is then proposed to be taken on the question of dissolving the commission, but at this instant the announcement is made that the Convention is surrounded by troops and an armed mob, and that it is no longer free; Marat then asserts the Assembly to be the dupe of a stratagem invented by the "criminal faction." The Minister of the Interior arriving, declares there is no danger. The Mayor also vouches for the quietude of the city. If troops surrounded the Convention, they were those chosen by the Commission. At six o'clock an attempt at adjournment is made, but foiled by the mountain, who vote Herault-Sechelles, president, in the place of Isnard (who, besides being a Girondin, had achieved unenviable notoriety by his would-be pro-

phetic threat, that the time should come when the traveller would ask on which side the Seine Paris stood), and end by decreeing the dissolution of the commission and enlargement of the arrested persons, i.e., the original motion of Marat. The following day, the 28th, the contest renewed itself in the chamber, and the commission was re-established. On the 29th nothing noteworthy occurred. On the 30th twenty-seven sections presented themselves in a body, demanding the destruction of the decrees of the Commission, and the arrest of all its members, and the sealing of their papers.

The sitting of the 31st opened at six o'clock in the morning, to the sound of the *générale* and tocsin. The memorable insurrection, destined to annihilate Girondism, was on foot. The minister of the interior declares it caused by the rehabilitation of the commission.

Tremendous excitement ensues in the Convention. But where is Marat? Not there. "I left the assembly," he says, "to deliberate on several important matters with the Committee of Public Safety, foreseeing that no measure would be carried in the Convention. From thence I went to the house of a citizen to obtain information respecting some aristocratic leaders of the section, *Buttes des haulins*. On my return, I discover a great crowd in the Rue Saint Nicaise; I am recognized and followed by the crowd. From all sides resound cries against the Mountain's want of energy. From all sides I hear demanded the arrest of traitor deputies and intriguers.



From all sides shouts of 'Marat, save us.' Arrived at the Carrousel, I observe multitudes of citizens in arms. The mob increases, always repeating the same cry. I entreat the people not to follow me; I enter the Tuilleries, and then the hotel of the Committee of Public Safety to be quit of them." (*Publiste*, 209). He there relates all that has happened to the committee, and insists on the pressing importance of an immediate dissolution of the obnoxious Commission of twelve. From thence he repairs with the *Maire* to the municipality, in order to prevent any disorderly movements. The *Maire* announces the object of the visit. Marat then says, "Citizens, the Committee of Public Safety is occupied with important measures for the punishment and repression of traitors. Keep yourselves in readiness; deploy your forces, and do not lay down your arms until you have made sure of your safety."

On the President urging the necessity and duty of the people's employing strictly legal means to attain its ends, Marat replies, that the duty and interests of the people alike demand an observance of the law and the due support of public functionaries; but that when these mandatories abuse the confidence placed in them, traffic with its rights and betray its interests; when they despoil, vex, and oppress, then the people has a right to restore to itself the powers delegated to them, to employ force to make them return to their duty, to punish those who have betrayed it, and

thus to save itself. "Citizens," he concludes, "you have no resource but your own energy, present an address to the Convention demanding the punishment of deputies faithless to the nation ; keep in readiness and do not lay down your arms until you have obtained this."

After first visiting the Committee of Public Safety, he returns to the Convention. There he finds a renewed demand has been made for a decree of accusation against the twenty-two designated members, in addition to those constituting the Commission. Marat proposes the erasure from the list of inculpated, of the names of Dussaulx, Lanthénas, and Lucas, whom he deemed more weak than sinning. On the Sunday perfect calm reigned in Paris. On the 2nd of June a deputation from the Commune demanded anew the decree of accusation as the only means of ensuring order. Instead of accepting this, the Convention simply invited those who were the subjects of the discord to resign. Marat thereupon offered to give in his own resignation if the decree were passed, a proposition which was about being carried, when an announcement was made that the Hall was surrounded by armed bands, meant to prevent the deputies from leaving until they had acceded to the popular demands. The fact being apparently verified, it was decided that the President should go forth at the head of the Convention. "He descends from his seat," writes Marat, "nearly all

the members following him, forces open the bronze door, at the same time that the guard makes way. Instead of at once returning and demonstrating thereby the falsity of these clamours, he conducts the Convention in procession round the terraces and gardens. I had remained at my post in the company of about thirty other 'Montagnards.' The tribunes, impatient at not seeing the Assembly return, began to murmur loudly; I sought to appease them, rushed after the Convention, and found it at the Pont-Tournant. I exhort it to return to its post; it returns, and re-assumes its functions. The proposition is re-opened upon the decree of accusation; it passes by a large majority, and the people retire peaceably. Thus passed without the shedding of blood, without outrage of any sort, without disorder, a day of alarms, which saw a hundred thousand citizens assembled in arms, provoked by six months of machinations and attempts, besides atrocious calumnies, perpetrated by their cowardly oppressors." *Publiciste*, 209

Such was the end of the Girondist faction, thirty-two placed under arrest, and the remainder escaping into the provinces, there to experience divers fates for the most part worse than that of their brethren in Paris. The same day Marat addressed the following letter to the Convention. "Impatient to open the eyes of the nation, abused as to my intentions by so many hired libellers, and being unwilling to be regarded as an object of discord, and ready to sacri-

fice all to the return of peace—I hereby renounce the exercise of my function as deputy, until judgment has been passed on the accused representatives. May the late scandalous scenes never be renewed in the Convention ! May all its members sacrifice their passions to their duties. May my colleagues of the Mountain let the whole nation see, that if they have not as yet fulfilled all their pledges, it is because their efforts have been thwarted by wicked men.” *Publiciste*, No. 209.

From the time of Marat's acquittal by the tribunal, a great change had been noticeable in the *Publiciste*. Numbers entirely from his pen had become rare, the paper was filled up for the most part with letters to which were added simply the editor's reflections.

The excitement of the trial, coupled with the enthusiasm attending its result, proved too great a strain for his powers, already enfeebled by upwards of three years of suffering and privation of every kind.

The inflammatory disease, which must have been long slumbering in his system, showed signs of awakening ; on the 5th of June he took to his bed. M. Bougeart remarks, “ The redaction of the *Publiciste*, is a veritable bulletin of his health. When the articles are long, the invalid is better ; when there are but a few lines his prostration is complete.” (*Bougeart*, vol. II., 254.)

The truth of his words, “ I am for the people ; I shall never be but for them,” he made good up to his

last moment for in the midst of agonising suffering his one thought was for the triumph of liberty and the true principles of the Revolution. He complains in No. 224 of the *Publiciste*, that he had addressed several letters on public affairs to the President of the Convention which had not been so much as read. Ten days afterwards, he writes, regarding the rumour that the Girondin volunteers of the departments were about combining to march on Paris: "Let them come; they will find Thuriot, Lindet, St. Just, all the brave montagnards; they will see Danton, Robespierre, Panis, &c., so often calumniated; they will find in them intrepid defenders of the people. Perhaps they will come to see the dictator, Marat; they will behold a poor devil who would give all the dignities of the earth for a few days' health, but always a hundred times more concerned for the welfare of the people than for his malady."

In the last number of the *Publiciste*, that of the 14th of July, appeared one of his most truly prophetic judgments of character—it was concerning Barrère. It is to be found in an article on the composition of the Committee of Public Safety. "Among its members there is one . . . whom I regard as the most dangerous enemy of the country. It is Barrère, whom Saint Foix indicated to the monarch as one of those Constitutionlists of whom he could make the most. As regards myself, I am convinced that he swims between two streams, to see which one will gain the ascendant; it is he who has paralysed

all efforts of vigour, and who enchains us with a view of strangling us. I challenge him to furnish proof to the contrary when, in conclusion, I denounce him as a disguised Royalist."



## CHAPTER X.

DURING the last week or two of Marat's life, the house was besieged by inquiries after his health. On the 12th of July the Jacobin's Club sent a deputation. This is the President's report. "We have been to see our brother Marat, he is very thankful for the interest you take in him. We found him in his bath, a table and inkstand and some journals surrounding him, occupying himself unceasingly with public affairs. It is not a serious illness from which he is suffering, but an indisposition, which has not yet seized the right side; there is much pent-up patriotism comprised in a very little body; . . . he complains of forgetfulness on the part of the Convention, in neglecting to read certain measures of Public Safety he had addressed to it."\* In replying to another deputation (that of the Cordeliers) he said, "Ten years of life, more or less, does not occupy my thoughts; my one desire is that I may say with my last breath, I die contented—the country is saved."

Here is a description, I quote from M. Bougeart, of the domicile of the "People's Friend," in the Rue

\* *Journal des Debats des Jacobin*, 16th July, 1793.

des Cordeliers, now Rue l'Ecole de Médecine, No. 22. "Situated on the first floor, it was composed, if we may judge of it from the *procès verbal* of five rooms; an anti-chamber, lighted by a window looking on to the court on the left. On entering this anti-chamber, and placing one's back to the door, three apartments presented themselves on the same plan. One to the right, lighted by a window looking on to the court; to the left, a bed-chamber, having a view of the street through two casements of Bohemian glass; and between these two rooms a small apartment, serving as a bath-room. The fifth room was the *salon*, which was entered by a door from the anti-chamber on the left, and also looked out upon the street. *Publication de M. C. Vatel.* The *personnel* was composed of Marat, Simonne, Catherine Evrard, sister of Simonne, Jeannette Maréchal, cook, and Laurent Bas, who was connected with the journal," &c.

On Saturday, the 13th of July, a vehicle stops at the door, and a young woman alights, who requests to see the "People's Friend," as she states she has important matters to disclose. Simonne replies that this is impossible, as the invalid is ordered not to see anyone. The young woman insists upon the importance of her visit; Simonne is inexorable. At last the visitor retires. In the evening, about seven o'clock, Marat receives a letter running thus: "I come from Caen. Your love for your country ought to make you wish to know the



plots which are there being projected. I await your reply."

About half-an-hour afterwards the young woman again presents herself at the door of the ante-chamber. She is this time repulsed by the *concièrge* of the house, who happened to be there; but Marat, hearing the altercation ensuing, calls out that the *citoyenne* should be allowed to enter.

Marat is, as usual, in his bath, covered with a large rug, a plank being laid across it for him to write upon. He is at the very moment occupied with the number of his journal, which appeared the next day, containing the article respecting Barrère, already quoted. Simonne leaves the room upon Charlotte Corday's entering.

The latter finding herself alone with Marat, takes a seat by the side of the bath. He commences: "What is passing, then, at Caen?" "Eighteen deputies in accord with the department reign there." "What are their names?" The list of names having been taken down, Marat is stated to have added, "*Ils ne tarderont pas à être guillotines*" (it will not be long before they are guillotined). Such, at least, were the words the murderess at first reported him to have said; but later, after having had time to arrange her narrative, she changed this into "*Je les ferais bientôt tous guillotines à Paris*" (I will shortly have them all guillotined in Paris). At that moment she rises, and, drawing a long knife, deals

him a terrific blow in the side. "*A moi, chère amie! d moi!*" cries Marat, and falls back. Royalists, constitutionalists, or Girondins could do no more—Marat was dead!

Every one is at once aroused. Simonne rushes towards them both, exclaiming, "*Ah, mon Dieu, il est assassiné.*" Confusedly she cries for succour; perceiving the assassin defending herself vigorously against the man Laurent Bas and the cook, she springs upon her and flings her to the ground. Returning to the corpse, she endeavours in vain to staunch the blood. The knife had penetrated under the clavicle of the right side, so deeply, that the surgeon, some minutes afterwards, could make his first finger pass the whole of its length through the wounded lung (*Bougart*, vol. ii. p. 265).

The assassin endeavoured to escape, and had already reached the ante-chamber, when Bas seized a chair and felled her to the ground. She again rose, but was held fast until effectually hemmed in by a crowd of patriots ready to tear her to pieces. The Commissary of Police arriving, Charlotte Corday was searched. Upon her was found the following letter, evidently intended for use in case her visit should have been again unsuccessful:—

"I wrote to you this morning. Marat, have you received my letter? I could not believe you had, as they refused me entrance; I trust that to-morrow you will accord me an interview. I repeat that I come from Caen. I have secrets to reveal to you

of the utmost importance to the safety of the Republic. *Besides all this, I am persecuted for the cause of liberty. I am unhappy; this, of itself, is sufficient to give me a claim on your protection.*" This last sentence might truly serve as an epitaph for the "People's Friend." In it is indicated his whole career. Volumes could not speak more for Marat than this one sentence, penned by his assassin.

The news rapidly spread over Paris; all the clubs were astir. Every Montagnard trembled for his life. "We shall all be assassinated," were the words heard on every side. The interrogatory of Charlotte Corday took place on the spot, and it was four hours—just upon midnight—before she was placed in a coach, destined for the Abbaye. It was with difficulty that the exasperated crowd, both in and outside the house, were prevented from executing summary justice.

The following day the question was brought before the Convention. "A great crime has been committed upon the person of a representative of the people," said the President. "Marat has been assassinated in his own house." Various sections then presented themselves with addresses, demanding that his remains should be transported to the Pantheon. The delegates of the section *Contrat Social* announced themselves thus: "Where art thou, David? Thou hast transmitted to posterity the image of Lepellétier, dying for the country; there remains yet another picture for thee." To which

David answers, "And I will paint it." Drouet advised moderation and patience, urging that a violent outbreak of some sort was all that the Girondins wanted as a pretext for exciting the departments against Paris. Upon the proposition of Chabot, the Convention decided on the 15th to be present in a body at the funeral. The President, on one occasion during the debate, said, "Those who unceasingly talk of their morality, of their principles, of their attachment to the laws, have shewn themselves capable of the most atrocious crime." The tribunes shouted, "Yes, yes; we will avenge him!"

At the Jacobin's Club, Laureant Bas, the printer, became for the nonce a hero; his least word was listened to with the utmost avidity by all—such was the eagerness for details of the horrible occurrence. Benta-bole, one of the society, spoke the following eulogy: "It is noble, undoubtedly, to hear citizens proposing to replace Marat, but this task is not so easy as many think. When we have found a man who, like Marat, has spent for four years whole nights meditating on the welfare of the people and the fall of tyrants, who has combated with an equal audacity kings, priests, nobles, intriguers, villains, and conspirators; who has braved iron, fire, poison, prison, even the scaffold, such an one will be worthy to replace Marat, and ought, after him, assuredly to hold the first rank." Robespierre thought it was not the time then to give the people the spectacle of a public funeral; but that after the Republic had come off finally victorious,

then would be the appropriate occasion for a public recognition of its benefactors and martyrs.

On the 16th the brother of Lepelletier, with Camille Desmoulins, drew up an address to all Frenchmen on the murder of Marat. They were requested to do this by the Jacobins, who desired that a public recognition might be sent to the affiliated societies in the departments. The sculptor Beauvallet, was commissioned by the Council General to mould a bust of the popular martyr. Although more than two days had elapsed since the murder nothing had been decided as to the funeral. Crowds unceasingly thronged the Rue des Cordeliers. Simonne, almost stupefied with grief, refused to leave the room where her loved one had breathed his last.

It was on Tuesday evening the 16th, that the funeral actually took place. The coffin was laid upon a sort of bed and borne by twelve men. Children dressed in white and carrying in their hands branches of cypress, surrounded the body. The entire Convention led by the President, followed, next came the municipal authorities, then the clubs, while bringing up the rear followed an enormous crowd.

The procession on leaving the Rue des Cordeliers, passed over the Pont-Neuf along the Quai de Ferraille, across the Pont-au-Change, and from thence to the Cordelier's Club. The interment in the garden of the club was then proceeded with. The cortège chanted patriotic airs, while every five minutes a salvo of cannon was fired from the Pont-Neuf.

The grave was situated under the very trees, where Marat had so often addressed his colleagues, on the burning questions of the day. Martin, the sculptor, had devised a tomb of granite rocks, with an iron door in the middle. Engraved upon it was the epitaph: "Here lies Marat, the 'People's Friend,' assassinated by the enemies of the people, July 13th, 1793." After a discourse from the President of the Convention and certain other persons in authority, the crowd began to defile before the monument under the banners of the clubs, each Section stopping a moment at the grave while its orator spoke a few words. One of these, Guirant by name, thus expressed himself: "You, who have seen nothing in Marat but crimes; you who ceaselessly speak of him as a man of blood, produce the names of his victims." He might well make this demand, for among the sixty-four persons who had been guillotined during the past twelve months, not one had been denounced or even referred to, by Marat. (*Vide* Bougeart, *Tome II.*, p. 284, *et seq.*)

During the whole of the night crowds pressed around the tomb. Speeches by torchlight, embodying vows of devotion to liberty and the Republic, were made. The following day the removal of the heart of Marat to the building of the Cordeliers took place, a splendid porcelain vase being chosen as its receptacle. Twenty-four members of the Convention, and twelve of the Commune, took part in this second funeral ceremony.

A deputation announced that on Sunday, the 28th, an altar would be raised around the heart of Marat. Sundry speeches ensued, more or less just, more or less extravagant, drawing parallels between the character of Marat and that of the founder of Christianity, but none of sufficient importance to merit reproduction in this place. The urn containing the remains was suspended from the roof of the large hall of the Cordeliers. The President closed the ceremony with the words, "Awake, Cordeliers! it is time. Let us hasten to avenge Marat; let us hasten to dry the tears of France. We have sworn that his enemies shall be proscribed; the oath is sacred—we have sworn it to the people."



## CHAPTER XI.

WERE the fugitive Girondins in any way parties to the murder of the "People's friend?" This question will probably never be altogether satisfactorily answered. That they were not directly so is tolerably certain, but that they had not in the hearing of the assassin spoken of assassination as justifiable, or expressed a desire that he might be assassinated, in some general way, but which nevertheless suggested the crime to her, this is by no means so certain.\* She came from Caen, the seat of Girondism, and she had had communication with certain prominent Girondins there, notably Barbaroux, one of the most ardent of them.

There has been much inflated sentimentality bestowed by historians on Charlotte Corday. All that the facts of the case tend to shew is, that she was mainly actuated by a craze of vanity. She desired to play a *rôle*, and pose herself as a heroine before the public gaze. She had adopted Girondin principles; had heard much of the recent overthrow of

\* Petion, after the event, spoke of the assassination as justifiable.



the Gironde and imprisonment of its deputies by the Mountain. The idea of assassinating one of those Chiefs of the Mountain, whose names she had learnt so to detest, suggested itself to her as a means of satisfying this vanity. The name of Marat was uppermost at the time, and perhaps, as she thought, from his prostrate condition he was easiest of access. Marat accordingly was selected as the victim. Her studiously theatrical conduct during her trial and at her execution tends to support this view. Those portrayals of her, as actuated by an exalted sense of patriotism, have no warrant in fact and may be attributed to that mawkish sympathy with female criminals, especially when possessed of the attraction of beauty, the extreme form of which is to be seen in the Western States of America. This, intensified in the present instance by hatred of Marat, is quite sufficient to account for the verdict of historians.

The Rue des Cordeliers was renamed Rue Marat shortly after the funeral; Montmartre was also called Mont-Marat. The Rue and the Faubourg Montmartre received a like designation. It was proposed to re-name Havre-de-Grâce, Havre-de-Marat, such was the enthusiasm even in the departments. Women christened their children Marat. "We will give them for a gospel," said one, "the complete works of this great man. Every patriot eagerly procured either a bust or a portrait of the deceased "People's friend."

The painter, David, according to promise executed a large cartoon representing the assassination. By the side of the tomb of Lazowski on the Carrousel, was erected an obelisk under which was placed the bust, the lamp, the writing-desk, and the bath of Marat. Before long, innumerable civic crowns covered the place. Hymns to his memory by the hundred were composed. Numerous fêtes and pageants in his honour were given by patriotic societies accompanied with hymns to liberty, &c. The example of Paris was before long followed by the whole of Revolutionary France.

On search being made by the Commune, the day after the funeral, only twenty-five sous, (*en assignat*), were found in Marat's room, shewing that he must have lived literally from hand to mouth. Unlike certain living pamphleteer politicians, he did not possess that happy faculty of combining the disinterested service of Humanity with large commercial profits. For some time previous to his death, Marat had been troubled by his inability to pay certain outstanding debts. But these, it would seem, were ultimately all settled during his lifetime; for although the Convention agreed to pay them out of the national funds, no creditor presented himself.

No sooner had the first burst of indignant enthusiasm following the assassination, subsided, than the enemies of Marat began to pour forth their calumnies against his memory. No one troubled

themselves to refute these calumnies till on the 8th of August, the figure of his widow, attenuated through grief and privation, was to be seen at the bar of the Assembly. "Citizens," said she, "you see before you the widow of Marat; I do not come here to ask of you favours, such as cupidity would covet, or even such as would relieve indigence; Marat's widow needs no more than a tomb. Before arriving at that happy termination to my existence, however, I come to ask that justice may be done in respect to the reports recently circulated against the memory of at once the most intrepid, and the most outraged, defender of the people."

The Convention remained silent, the President not even replying. It well knew it had allowed disgusting caricatures and obscene libels to be circulated with impunity.

Six weeks after this occurrence, Albertine Marat's sister, who had now come to live with Simonne, in a pamphlet, entitled "*Réponse de la Sœur de Ami du Peuple aux détracteurs de Marat*," ably refuted the most seemingly plausible of these calumnies.

A certain Jacques Roux had the effrontery to continue the publication of the *Publiciste*, under the name of "*Publiciste de la République par l'Ombre de Marat*," with the old epigram, and taking it up at the same number at which it had left off. This lasted for more than a fortnight, and it was only stopped on Simonne's denunciation; the Convention, although not over-careful of her husband's

memory, not caring to see his views travestied by a disguised Royalist. The presses of Marat were given over to the Jacobin's Club. An abortive attempt to re-establish the *Ami du Peuple* was made by the Cordeliers. On the 20th of January, 1794, the Cordelier's Society defiled into the Convention Hall, bearing before them the urn containing the heart of Marat. They requested that the Assembly would decree the re-publication of the most important of his political writings, and their transmission and circulation in the departments. The motive for this request was a double one—to spread Republican principles, and at the same time place Simonne Marat out of the reach of poverty. The petition, however, was not acceded to by the Convention.

On the 12th of Brumaire, anno III. (2nd of November, 1794), an announcement was to be seen in the *Journal of the Mountain* of a republication of Marat's works, this announcement being followed shortly after, by a prospectus of the complete political works, from the "Chains of Slavery" downwards issued by the widow.

On the 22nd of Brumaire II. (14th November, 1793), David proposed for Marat the honours of the Pantheon, already accorded to Mirabeau and Lepelletier. The motion was carried, but, strange to say, was not put into effect before the 21st of September, 1794, nearly two months after the fall of Robespierre, when the reaction had already commenced. The Pantheonisation was notwithstanding performed

with all due ceremony, the remains of Mirabeau being thrust out at a side door, at the same time that those of Marat reached the principal entrance of the Pantheon. But the reaction did not long permit them to rest there. In February they were removed and interred in a neighbouring burial-ground, while at the same time the busts in the public buildings were destroyed, and the names of the places called after Marat changed, &c.

Simonne continued to live with Albertine till her death, on the 24th of February, 1824, from the consequences of a fall from a staircase.

On the 6th of November, 1841, the following notice appeared in the *Siècle*:—"The sister of the famous Marat has just died, at the age of eighty-three years, in a garret in the Rue de la Barillerie, in the midst of the most profound misery, having no one beside her on her death-bed but a grocer and a portress, the only friends remaining to her."

"This lady, whose features strongly recalled those of her brother, lived for a long time on the proceeds of her industry in making hands for watches, a kind of work in which she is said to have excelled. She was well acquainted with the Latin language. Age having come with its infirmities, she had fallen into great distress. Four neighbours and friends accompanied her remains to the public burial ground (*fosse Commune*)."  
*Sit terra levis.*

## CHAPTER XII.

WE have in the foregoing pages, followed in all its important details, the career of one of the chief actors in that great epoch-making event, or, rather, series of events, in which we may fairly see the commencement of the modern era, and the final close of the mediæval. The main course of the French Revolution, subsequently to the death of Marat, will be familiar to every one. The Terror—Robespierre—Thermidor—the Reaction.

It is idle to speculate on the course the Revolution might have taken had Marat lived. The assassination, in reality, only precipitated his death by a few weeks. As it was, the death of Marat proved the timely removal of an insuperable obstacle to the criminal designs of Robespierre, who was not long before showing himself in his true character.

Marat may be regarded as the embodiment of the first of the practical sides of the "Modern Revolution;" as well as one of the noblest of human feelings, sympathy with suffering and its correlative indignation at oppression. He was the personification of Equality. His sympathy was of a unique kind; he seemed to feel in his own person the sufferings of those with whom he sympathised. It was this feeling that goaded him on to that incessant and exces-

sive activity, which must under any circumstances have prematurely caused his death. He looked at all things solely and wholly from one point of view. Seeing and feeling the suffering of the people, the one aim of all he did and wrote was the alleviation of this suffering. Every thing which did not directly concern this aim was indifferent to him. All things conducing to it were righteous and all things tending in an opposite direction, however lawful in the eyes of the world, were to him criminal. His vision was bounded by a horizon, where he saw the necessities of life within the reach of each and all. He had no ideal Republic before him, like Anarchis Cloutz, or Chaumette. He would have tolerated or even supported the monarchy, so long as he thought the monarchy not incompatible with the freedom and happiness of the people in the sense above mentioned.

As soon as he saw in it an obstruction to the realisation of his great object, he became republican.

At the same time it should be remembered that he had never from the first, regarded the king in any other light than as the highest functionary of the people, as strictly answerable to the people as any functionary. The transition from such a conception as this to pure Republicanism, every one must admit involves no real inconsistency.

I hope that my sketch has succeeded in dispelling, in the reader's mind, the mass of atrocious, though somewhat nebulous libels which, during eighty-six years, have accumulated around the memory of the

"People's friend." As I have said at the commencement, it is his moral steadfastness and logical adhesion to principle, through good report and through evil report, which must, as it seems to me, command, at least, respect, from all who are capable of appreciating nobleness and single-mindedness in a public career, whatever may be their political opinions.

It is easy to pick holes in Marat's character, still easier in his political programme. As regards the first, it may be said that he was ambitious, that he loved fame. To this I would reply by challenging the first public-man (certainly political leader), who is without ambition of some sort, to cast the first stone at Marat. That he was not insensible to fame is conceded; but the outspoken and vehement temperament to which so many of his seemingly sanguinary utterances may be attributed, has probably also to answer for much of this apparent egotism. Nothing is a greater misfortune for a man's reputation, than for him to wear his heart on his sleeve. Marat spoke and wrote, often injudiciously what he thought and felt at the moment, and for this his memory has suffered, probably more than that of any other man.

That his political programme, his basis of action, was narrow, that is also true. He failed to recognize the synthetic character of human life and interests. He failed to grasp progress as a whole, and, above all, to see that speculative and religious reconstruction is its first and most essential condition. In the recognition of this fact (whatever we



may think of their solution of it), the Hébertist party were far in advance of him. Marat was, in short, no idealist, but a practical man, though the virtue of logical consistency, usually so conspicuous by its absence in practical men—was eminently present in him.

He accepted the "Social contract" of Rousseau as his basis, and upon this he founded his "Plan de Constitution" and "Plan de Legislation Criminelle."

His journalistic writings were, for the most part, simply applications of these two works, to the exigencies of the situation, and events as they presented themselves. Yet if his basis was narrow, and to some extent fallacious, no man ever worked more untiringly or more consistently, up to his light in the service of humanity and progress, than did the "People's friend," Jean Paul Marat.

Although, for the time being, his work was abortive and his name calumniated, we doubt not that, when the human race is again united under one ideal and one aim, the future will recognize him as one of its noblest precursors.

THE END.

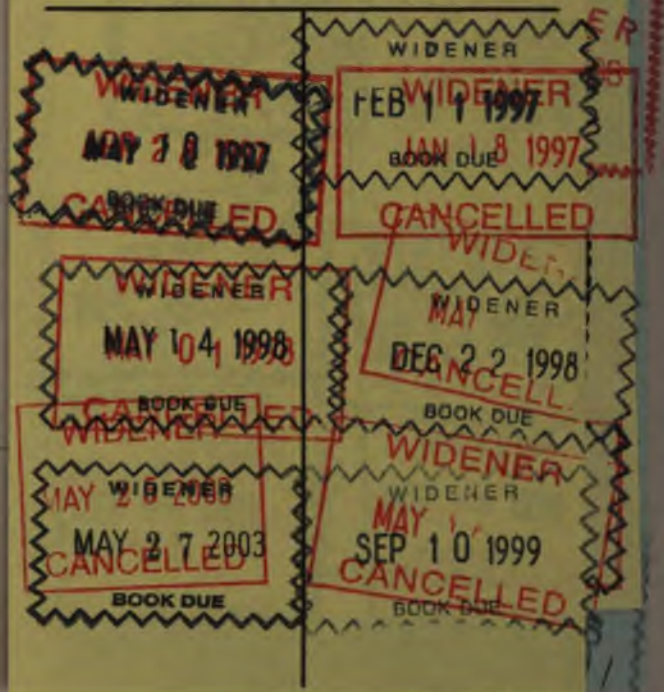






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